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# Interests, Identity, and the Geopolitical Causes of Military Rule in Egypt

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03/15/2015

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## Introduction

The recent political turmoil in Egypt associated with the Arab Spring led to the removal of two heads of state, the establishment of new political parties, and emergency elections. However, the Egyptian military was able to navigate the tumultuous political environment and maintain its influence over the government and its institutions. While the United States and others in the international community expressed concern over the military's methods to enforce law and preserve their political dominance, condemnation was minimal and brief. Now, with the Muslim Brotherhood's recent removal and expulsion from politics, the military stands unopposed as the most experienced and well-organized political entity in Egypt.

Over the course of the last four years, protests sprang up and spread throughout the Arab world as opposition groups voiced their grievances and challenged local regimes. This seemingly spontaneous outbreak of violent, popular political protests across the region came to be known as "The Arab Spring". The demonstrations that led to regime change reaffirms many concerns Middle Eastern states have regarding internal stability. In Egypt, the population united to voice grievances against the government and exact political change. However, the current structure of the Egyptian polity and the importance of its stability to the interests of other states will prevent the current political landscape from evolving into a true representative government. This work will analyze the geopolitical situation of Egypt in the context of the political and social changes in the Middle East, and why current developments are conducive to the military's political dominance.

To examine how geopolitics facilitate the preservation of a military regime in Egypt, this work seeks to answer the following questions: How do the political/religious dynamics in the region effect government stability? What interests to states have in Egypt's stability/instability? Why is Egypt's geopolitical context significant in regards to these dynamics? How have external state interests influenced internal Egyptian politics, and how does this influence facilitate military political dominance? By answering these fundamental questions, this work argues that the Egyptian military's political control is a result of geopolitical conditions and regional dynamics that have influenced the military's political capital within Egyptian society.

The first question, relating to the region's political and regional dynamics, raises security concerns of states with interests in the Middle East. The Arab Spring revealed a variety of

political movements ranging from more secular groups seeking representative government, to those with intentions to implement facets of Islamic law. In accordance with their own economic and/or security interests, external state actors attempt to influence the internal political dynamics within other states to inhibit potential challenges to their own legitimacy. In regards to regional dynamics, the third question raises the significance of the location and geography of Egypt with the Middle East.

Communicating the historical context of the region helps the reader understand the interests of other states the stability of Egypt, and helps frame the argument regarding the possible implications instability could have on the global economy and neighboring regimes. After discussing the evolution of the Egyptian state, the work I examines the current relationships between the Egyptian military and external state actors. Discussing the types of material, financial, and diplomatic aid provides understanding of external interests in Egypt, and why the military was able to maintain authority during the political fallout after the removal of Mubarak.

In order to adequately navigate through the complex series of events that allowed the Egyptian military to retain political power, it is essential that the reader refers to the previous questions, as they provide the necessary foundation for the following hypothesis: Due to the military's influence over the political and economic infrastructure of the Egyptian state, combined with their familiarity of existing regional alliances and security dynamics, they were able to navigate the revolution and remain the most influential political entity within the Egyptian government.

## Analytical Framework

The control of the Egyptian military over the political and economic sectors of society is intrinsically linked to its geopolitical context in the region. There is ongoing theoretical debate regarding the definitions and applications of terms such as geopolitics, sovereignty, and legitimacy. However, for the sake of straightforwardness, this work will use common definitions associated with international relations theory. Geopolitics refers to the influence of geography, economics, and demography on the politics and foreign policy of a state.<sup>1</sup> A state's geopolitical

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<sup>1</sup> "Geopolitics." Merriam-Webster.com. 2015. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/geopolitics>

context involves the geographic characteristics of the state in relation to population centers, available resources, and the sovereign boundaries of other state entities in its proximity. Such factors affect state security, internal stability, and external relationships. The state is only a sovereign entity if it has the authority and the right to govern.<sup>2</sup> If there is a functioning governing body, it is able to preside over, protect, and mobilize a population to secure its interests. The governing body does so by establishing legal authority and institutional infrastructure to promote organization and consistency to aid in the management of the population. The government's ability to manage, protect, and mobilize the population depends upon legitimacy. A population's acceptance of, and willingness to adhere to that authority determines the legitimacy of the regime and its institutions.<sup>3</sup> In inter-state relationships, legitimacy is the recognition between governing bodies of one another's authority, and/or sovereignty over populations and resources within specific territorial boundaries.<sup>4</sup> A state that fails to secure interests will face economic and security vulnerabilities, and the presence of such vulnerabilities can cause a population, and/or other states to question the authority of the regime. Thus, stability coincides with internal or external challenges to a regime's legitimacy.<sup>5</sup> As the Egyptian regime pursued interests, the geopolitical context helped mold institutional infrastructure, as well as state and foreign policy.

While this work is not specifically about foreign policy, it will adopt a framework similar to Raymond Hinnebusch's modified realism applied in *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*. In that work, Hinnebusch suggests that analysis of the region requires a modified form of realist theory because of several unique factors that prevent any one theory from being flawless in its application. The factors include *irredentism*, *suprastate identity*, and *duality*, all of which are related geopolitical consequences of the formation of Middle Eastern states, and contribute to the broad instability of the region.<sup>6</sup>

*Irredentism* is a cultural or historical claim to a region or territory that is now occupied by a state, or influenced by an alternative authority. Hinnebusch claims that the root of Irredentism is sub-state communities and ethnic groups that spill across state borders, becoming "trans-state"

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<sup>2</sup> Roberts, John. "Sovereignty." The Internet Encyclopedia of International Relations.  
<http://www.towson.edu/polsci/irencyc/sovrein.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Lake, David A. Building Legitimate States after Civil Wars. In: Hoddie, Matthew & Hartzell, Caroline A. ed. *Strengthening Peace in Post-Civil War States*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2010. p. 31-32, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 35-36.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 43-48

<sup>6</sup> Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States*, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc. Boulder, CO, 2002), p. 5-12

communities that often instigate territorial conflict. For example, the Kurdish community is a consistent source of regional disruptions because it extends across the northwest of Syria, northern Iraq and Iran, and into the south eastern region of Turkey.<sup>7</sup> The Palestinians are also a community that occupies a non-state territory in the Levant, and conflict between Israel and this community is a continuous source of refugees spilling into surrounding states like Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. Finally, the presence of Shi'ite communities extending from Iran and much of Iraq, bleed into many heavily Sunni states in the Gulf, causing many sectarian conflicts that continue to have regional implications.<sup>8</sup>

Hinnebusch suggests that since the state system was more or less imposed on the Middle East, much of the pre-existing cultural and linguistic unity still exists, this is *Suprastate identity*. A population's loyalty and identification with a larger community, like the Arab World or the Islamic *umma*, complicates the pillars of sovereignty because policies by one state will indirectly influence the internal dynamics within another.<sup>9</sup>

With the presence of *suprastate identity* and *irredentism*, ruling elites have to constantly form policies that adhere to the demands of their own sovereignty as well as those of the larger Arab community. Such behavior refers to *duality*, or a feeling of duty and allegiance towards both.<sup>10</sup> For security and survival, states cannot ignore or neglect these factors, which follows the demands of traditional realist theory. However, history is riddled with instances where Middle Eastern states prioritize one over the other, resulting in significant changes in regional dynamics. Nassar's attempt to unify Syria and Egypt was an act that reinforced the Pan-Arab identity, as did the 1967 war with Israel. Conversely, after each state felt the consequences of continual conflict with Israel, they began to act contrary to the Arab identity, taking self-serving measures to ensure their survival. For Egypt, Anwar Sadat's peace treaty with the Jewish state is a primary example.<sup>11</sup>

While one can argue that states are reacting to constructed identities, constructivism is insufficient because it denies the state quest for survival, and the drive to expand influence and power. The theory ignores the fact that military power, not public opinion, forced a shift in

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<sup>7</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 7-8

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 5-12

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p. 8

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 9

regional dynamics during the wars with Israel, causing states like Egypt to abandon identities and adopt more realist self-help policies.<sup>12</sup>

However, traditional realism is also insufficient because it ignores domestic and internal factors that result in *suprastate identity*, *irredentism*, and *duality*. In the Middle East, such factors cannot be ignored, as they clearly influence the survival of states in the region.<sup>13</sup> Realism assumes a level of secure national identity that is not present in Middle East. Instead, the Hinnebusch approach refers to the region as a unique *system of states*, mostly linked by power and interests.<sup>14</sup>

These conditions create a distinctive regional system where states do operate according to interests associated with power and preservation. However, survival often depends on a regime's ability to manage external state relationships, as well as internal pressures that stem from the various identities present within the region. As traditional definitions of sovereignty are not sufficient in the Middle East due to the factors described above, this framework is adequate because enables an examination of Middle Eastern states as rational actors struggling to survive threats emanating from internal and external factors.

## Literature Review

In the introduction, there are references to the use of a modified version of realism as a framework for this project. As mentioned earlier, Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami first employ the use of such a framework because of the unique features of the Middle Eastern system.<sup>15</sup> State actors do act according to their interests and survival; however, their legitimacy and sometimes their survival depends upon their reaction to various dynamics within the population. The dynamics are the result of constructed identities among Middle Eastern populations that are *suprastate*, or transcend traditional state boundaries, and many prioritize their ethnic, religious, and cultural identities over their state affiliations.

For states operating in this region, the pursuit of interests is a unique challenge. For example, in Egypt, participation in the international community is an adherence to the state

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<sup>12</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 5-12

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 10

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p. 2, 19, 21



structure recognized by realists, and is essential for economic stability and added security. However, domestic stability and legitimacy often relies upon their ability to appease, marginalize, reprimand, embrace, and sometimes personify specific *suprastate* identities that exist across the region.<sup>16</sup> The challenge for a regime is to understand and act on interests of the state, while being privy to domestic dynamics that have an ability to reverberate across sovereign boundaries. The result is *duality* which requires an analysis of how geopolitics mold the foreign and domestic policies required to stabilize the state.<sup>17</sup>

In 2007, Peter Mandaville's *Global Political Islam* discusses many of the complexities related to some specific identities mentioned earlier. His focus is the evolving relationship between religion and politics in the Muslim world, and while religious affiliation is a significant *suprastate* identity that influences policy in the region, Mandaville briefly mentions identities regarding nationalistic and ethnic associations as a part of his historical accounts, and recognizes that they are also factors that regimes have to consider. However, Mandaville's focus is not on regimes or the state, but rather existing religious identities, their current relationship to politics, and the possibility of representative government developing in the region. He is careful to describe Muslim politics in terms of the *“Muslim world”*, rather than confine the realm of politics to existing regimes or ruling parties. He argues that an evolution of political ideology is taking place in Muslim society, that it is not a phenomenon exclusive to the political arena of government, and that representative government will only be achieved through a reconciliation between religion and politics, rather than a separation of the two.

To explain the many ways that Islam influences and infiltrates politics in the Muslim world, Mandaville breaks down his work into several sections. First, he provides a brief history of the religion on to the point where the region experienced the formation of states. The section is important because it describes the conservative roots of the religion, how populations consolidated to form communities around their religious traditions, and the religious laws and hierarchies that developed to govern those communities. The section will be important for this thesis because it provides a foundation for understanding how populations in the region seem to prioritize their association with religious identities over their nation-state, and the role religion plays in the manipulation of the region's politics.

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<sup>16</sup> Hinnebusch, Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 8-11

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 8

Mandaville's next section transitions off the previous by describing Islamism as a political strategy, "Islamization from above", and how Islamism takes root in weak or failed states.<sup>18</sup> In this way, Mandaville shows religion is used as a tool for leaders in communities, all the way up state level, to justify their political position and/or their rule. Today, profound evidence of Islamization from above in the Gulf Monarchies and the Mullahs in Iran, while Yemen and Afghanistan are great examples of religion being used in weak states to justify violent pursuits of political influence and to rally populations behind a political cause. Even in authoritarian military regimes like Egypt, the role of religion in politics is a serious debate, and the ruling party often attempts to appease this deliberation by incorporating religious leaders or aspects of Sharia law into their judicial systems.<sup>19</sup>

Both religious and military regimes realize the internal threat from religious organizations because of their ability to tap into and address the grievances within communities, often promoting their own political agendas while undermining the legitimacy of the regime. In failed states, organizations can gain influence by providing much needed social welfare services, and then use this influence to blame other groups or identities for their condition, use their own religious identity to advocate superiority over rivals, and justify pursuits of political control.<sup>20</sup> For the thesis, these sections lend credence to the value populations put on their religious identities, and why states in the region cannot afford to ignore organizations that take political stances while invoking religious validity. The sections also provide insight into the various state strategies and "duality" regimes use to react to the threats to stability that *suprastate* identities represent.

The next segment of Mandaville's work goes into more detail regarding the various strategies religious organizations use to oppose or undermine monarchies, theocracies, and military regimes. Mandaville also examines radical Islam, jihad, and Muslim transnationalism.<sup>21</sup> He goes into great detail about religious networks and brotherhoods that unite like-minded individuals behind an identity and ideology. With such resources, organizations can focus on domestic grievances to gain political influence from within a state, or they can use their religious networks to recruit followers all over the world, and embark on ambitious international

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<sup>18</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 147, 198

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 112

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 199-236

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 237, 275

campaigns of violence that target other states or governments that represent opposing ideologies. Radical Islam, according to Mandaville, targets capitalist states because of the constant encroachment of ideas, products, and symbols, that radicals believe, threaten Islamic traditions by corrupting their religious ideals.<sup>22</sup> Mandaville, perhaps unknowingly, reveals how organizations use whatever resources they have to act, much like their state counterparts, according to their own interests. He combines the realities of globalization with the vast networks and organizations that use traditional Islam to unite the less fortunate and/or the disenfranchised, and pursue their own political ends.

Mandaville's next section poses the question, "Who Speaks for Islam?" Here, he refers to the struggle between "Islamism" and "post-Islamism" to explain the turbulence regarding possible reconciliation between traditional and modern interpretations of the religion.<sup>23</sup> "Islamism" takes a more literal approach to application of Holy Scripture in the Quran to life, as well as to legal and political institutions. Contrarily, he quotes Bayat in a description of "post-Islamism" and/or "modern Islamism", which "emphasizes rights instead of duties, plurality in place of authoritative voice, historically rather than fixed in scripture" acknowledging ambiguity, multiplicity, inclusion, and compromise in principles and in practice.<sup>24</sup> In his description, Bayat emphasizes that these individuals seek freedom of expression and the representation of different political philosophies and ideologies in government. The text goes on to propose that it is possible for Muslims to simultaneously partake in aspects of both "Islamism" and "post-Islamism." Muslim moderates are not trying to depart from Muslim politics, but rather reconstitute it "in forms more suited to a globalized world."<sup>25</sup>

In his conclusion, Mandaville suggests that the world is changing and that Muslim politics are adapting to forces neoliberalism, capitalism, and globalization.<sup>26</sup> He asserts that this transformation is not necessarily a pursuit of secular democracy, but a unique form of pluralized Muslim politics. That scholars should not see this "post-Islamism" as movement away from religion towards secularism, but as an attempt to eradicate notions that the separation of religion and politics is a pre-requisite to pluralism. Mandaville recognizes this hybrid will be difficult to

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<sup>22</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 238

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 32-38

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 336

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 348

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 332-351

achieve, as moderate *post-Islamist* will have to contend with both traditional Islamists and secular undercurrents promoted by the west.<sup>27</sup>

Mandaville argues that globalization and modern media have led to a broad moderate *post-Islamist* movement throughout the Muslim world, and identifies the persistent presence of *traditionalist* and secular ideologies that compete for influence. However, his lack of state level analysis suggests that he may be overestimating the extent of the *post-Islamist* transformation, as coping with globalization and the resolution of religious divisions are only two of the many factors that impact the formation of representative government. Mandaville does briefly discuss specific historical accounts of tactics regimes use to quell competition and opposition to their authority, but he only does so to describe the development of grievances and origin of organizations or popular movements. Clearly, he underestimates the role of regimes in maintaining the region's current political landscape.

After examining state interests and geopolitical realities, questions arise about Mandaville's assertions regarding the degree to which Muslim populations are aware that they are trying to form a unique style of governance that incorporates religion and pluralism. Perhaps, most do not identify this *post-Islamist* alternative because it only represents a more moderate form of Islam, not an additional form of government. Populations simply see government as corrupt, and believe pious Islamic leadership or secular military rule are the only alternatives to this status quo. Populations only identify with these options because the region still lacks an example of a state that successfully navigated the transformation to an Islamic form of representative government.

Turkey and Iran have governments that are perhaps the closest to resembling this; however, there is no shortage of corruption allegations, censoring of media, police brutality, and opposition movements in either state. The structure of Iran's government reveals many branches of government similar to those found in the west, but the system is subject to the religious oversight of the Supreme Leader (Ayatollah) and the Guardian Council (Mullahs), who most scholars agree, dictate Iranian policy.<sup>28</sup> Turkey is considered a secular representative government that happened to elect Islamic leadership; however, it is not a representative government based

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<sup>27</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 350-351

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 179-195

on Islamic principles and foundations.<sup>29</sup> Most recently, efforts by the Islamic leadership to amend current laws and pass religious legislation led to secular opposition in the country. These protests and grievances are only exacerbated by evidence of corruption and attempts to consolidate more permanent political power.<sup>30</sup>

Global Political Islam does recognize the problem of consistent instability in the region, but Mandaville argues that religious divisions within the populations are the primary reason preventing a transition to pluralistic government. What he does not adequately address is state/regime interests in opposing pluralism. With superior resources and organization, states have an ability to create a political and social environment that is not conducive to the survival of political transformations that could undermine their influence over government. Controlling access to the media, bribery, intimidation, detainment, and/or violent persecution are only a few possible tactics employed by the regime to consolidate political power and neutralize the emergence of potential rivals.

Mandaville does a great job examining the religious identities in the Middle East, and his insight will be invaluable when analyzing the effects of these specific identities on Middle Eastern politics. He even describes Sadat's *dualist* approach to domestic and foreign policy as he distanced himself from the Pan-Arab identity of Nasser, trying to make domestic appeals to religious identity parallel to foreign policy overtures towards Israel and the United States.<sup>31</sup> However, he does not adequately address how the state interests influence the region's political landscape. The work almost assumes that the spread of modern ideas give populations the necessary resources to control their own destiny, if only they can reconcile the differences between their identities. Of course, the Arab Spring, Syria, and Iraq are just the most recent examples of how dynamics associated with *suprastate* identities can destabilize governments. However, an ability to destabilize government does not translate to an ability or intent to establish democracy. In Egypt, the military regime revealed the internal mechanisms and external resources that helped insulate it from the effects of instability. Mandaville's assertions are useful to understand the extent to which *suprastate* identities influence populations in the

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<sup>29</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 120, 121

<sup>30</sup> The Economist. "No Longer a Shining Example: Turkey's Government Disappoints because of Allegations of Sleaze and its Increasingly Authoritarian Rule". *Turkish Politics*, Jan. 2014.  
<http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21592671-turkeys-government-disappoints-because-allegations-sleaze-and-its-increasingly-authoritarian?zid=307&ah=5e80419d1bc9821ebe173f4f0f060a07>

<sup>31</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 107-108

region and provide insight into the challenges they pose to regime survival; however, he does not address the realist approach that regimes will take to pursue interests and maintain political dominance. However, this work will examine Egypt's geopolitical situation in relation to these identities and inter-state relations in an attempt to clarify recent events in Egypt to explain why representative government will not develop from the recent revolutions.

The first chapter will use the framework and the themes to discuss the historical context of the Middle East from its empirical roots and into the post WWII era. Here, the work will introduce the various political, cultural, and religious, "identities" adhered to by many among Arab populations. These identities are the foundation of the *suprastate identity* and *irredentism*, leading to state policies influenced by the *dual* demands of both the population and the state. The chapter will focus on Egypt's interests and behavior in regards to these themes, but include additional examples to show how they shaped the current regional landscape and political dynamics. The objective is to show the reader the significance and salience of regional identities. Empire caused ethnic, religious, and cultural identities to embed themselves into local communities, making them susceptible to manipulation by external powers during the demise of the Ottoman Empire and up through WWII.

The second chapter will analyze the introduction of the state system and the advent of oil following WWI and WWII. While external oil interests led to a large influx of external influences during WWII, their departure forced regimes to seek legitimacy by balancing state interests with various domestic pressures associated with identity. The segment will focus on the transition to autonomy, and the drastic shift in state behavior due to sudden preoccupations with security and legitimacy. This chapter's objective is to show the shift in regional economic/security dynamics with the sudden significance of oil and an abrupt departure of external influences. In doing so, the work will provide a necessary transition from a regional context of instability and competition, to the Egyptian military's consolidation of political and economic power in Egypt following WWII.

The third section will go into more detail regarding the structure of the Egyptian government, using historical evidence to reveal the military's desire to control the decision-making process while avoiding political accountability. In this way, the military indirectly influences and regulates various social, economic, and political aspects of the state, allowing them to maintain an image of neutrality among the Egyptian populous. The chapter will show how, over time, the

institutional structure of the regime insulates the military establishment from failures in governance, as they resign themselves to a position of definitive influence and oversight. The chapter will solidify the argument by revealing how the military establishment entrenched itself into the infrastructure of the state. With shifts in security dynamics and challenges to its legitimacy, the regime was able to position itself within economic and political institutions in response to changing international circumstances. This will provide the reader with a better understanding as to why they continue to maintain influence and guide state policy despite their previous association with the Mubarak regime.

The fourth chapter will look at the regime in the lead up to the revolution and the effect of the Arab Spring on internal politics in Egypt. This will allow the reader to draw evidence from previous chapters to explain Egypt's lack of significant change in leadership or regime type. After Mubarak was forced to step down, the Muslim Brotherhood seized the opportunity to win legitimate political power through elections. However, President Morsi's term in office did not last. Various political maneuvers suggest that the Muslim Brotherhood had aspirations to consolidate political power, eventually leading to the military's forceful removal of the Brotherhood from the political arena. The chapter will analyze the series of events that evolved in the lead up to the first elections, the revolution, through Morsi's reign, providing evidence that the military had no intention to relinquish their influence over government. By analyzing the political context surrounding the removal of two heads of state and the military's persistent relevance, chapter two will allow the reader to utilize the information from previous chapters to understand why another influential political entity like the Muslim Brotherhood gained and lost power so quickly.

Chapter five will continue by providing a more detailed examination of the interests of states like Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States, that have a significant relationship with Egypt. Analyzing the origin and foundations of these relationships will offer additional information about the importance of security for regional stability. By understanding the interests of Egypt's allies, the chapter provides examples of state actions to counter internal instability in Egypt. In doing so, the work will reveal that Egypt's allies are consistent in their desire to prevent the spread of discontent to like-minded populations in neighboring states, and avoid changes in leadership that might alter current relationships. In this chapter, current examples will establish

consistencies between the framework and state behavior in the region, lending credibility to the argument by suggesting that states with interests in Egypt prefer stability over democracy.

In chapter 6, the segment will focus on the geopolitical factors that allow the regime to contain protests, isolate discontent, neutralize political rivals, and secure external resources to stabilize the economy. The chapter will also highlight consistencies in the military's behavior throughout its history. The chapter will then transition into an analysis of the military's conduct following the Arab spring and up to the present, revealing the presence of dual/parallel external and internal strategies to ensure the regime's survival. By securing external support while managing domestic pressures, the military was able to simultaneously discredit the Muslim Brotherhood, while gathering external financial resources to prevent further deterioration of the economy. The execution of such an approach prevented the establishment of an alternative government, and allowed them maintain their influence over Egyptian politics.

## Conclusion

When the revolution began, much of the world's focus shifted to Tahrir Square and the possible grassroots transition towards representative government. When Mubarak stepped down, this seemed to reaffirm the authenticity of revolution; however, it was actually an opportunity for the military to retain its position of power. Mubarak threatened the military's control by proposing to give his son, Gamal, the Presidency and the business elite more political influence. The protests movements provided the Egyptian military an opportunity to remove two heads of state that sought to marginalize their role in government, all while pretending to represent the will of the Egyptian people. The military appears to support a limited electoral process, so long as politicians and bureaucrats defer to the military on policy initiatives and implementation. As a result, the military balanced its interests with those of the popular movement. In this way, they were able to navigate the political turmoil without losing their dominant political role or the external economic resources on which their position depends.

The military regime survives because they understand their capabilities and interests in relation to geopolitical context. Domestically, they survive by being present in political decision making, but never solely accountable. This aloof approach proved to serve the military well. As the revolution persisted, the military remained intact and continued to govern. By carefully



responding to specific areas of crisis, they were able to use the chaos as an excuse to detain political rivals and contain the protests, all while keeping diplomatic channels open. While other political parties jostled for media attention and popular approval, the Egyptian military provided external states with a line of communication with the only significant governing body in Egypt. Such negotiations gave the military options, and although the U.S. promised to revoke aid if the military continued to crack down on the Muslim Brotherhood, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States quickly offered their support as Egyptian military continued to marginalize the influence of their mutual rival.

A consistent theme in this work is the belief that stability in the Middle East is fragile because of popular adherence to identities that transcend state sovereignty. The evolution of the Arab Spring into the current situations in Iraq and Syria, confirms the ability of popular movements to reverberate throughout the region. As a result, international allies are wary of representative government in a state like Egypt, because democracy is governance in flux. Fluctuating policies could disrupt existing allegiances, threaten the stability of other populations in the region, and have wider implications on the global economy. Since the military establishment in Egypt is responsible for initiating, cultivating, and maintaining many of the state's international arrangements, their influence over government is also in the interests of their allies.

The final portion of the conclusion will suggest that the military regime is likely to survive so long as identity dynamics in the region remain, and the military institution does not reform or fracture from within. External support for military influence over the Egyptian government is also likely to continue due to interests in stability and the preservation of existing international relationships.

## Chapter 1

### Transition from Empire: Birth of Relevant Identities

#### *Rise of Islam*

When the Prophet Mohammed was born in 571 AD, the Middle East consisted of many different cultures and religions as the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire and the Sassanid Empire continued to vie for control of the region.<sup>32333435</sup> The rise of Mohammed's influence and the emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula coincided perfectly with the desperate struggle between the Sassanids and the Byzantines, as much of their focus was on the strategically valuable cities and trade routes to the north. As the empires gained and lost territory, continuous war made them economically and militarily vulnerable.

Being on the outskirts of ongoing conflict between the Sassanids and the Byzantines, Mohammed and his new religion grew in influence among smaller communities in the peninsula without drawing much attention. Initially, attempts to spread his ideas in Mecca were futile, as he did not yet have the reputation to attract a large number of followers. However, by moving to Medina, Mohammed gradually developed a loyal following, building confidence in his leadership through successful raids on trading caravans.<sup>36</sup> As his reputation grew, word of his deeds and his religious message began to spread even further. With a battle hardened collection of followers, Mohammed had a force strong enough to challenge Mecca, and eventually, the more preeminent military powers and religious influences of the period.<sup>37</sup>

Mohammed's conquest was uncommon in that it did not spring from the inheritance or acquisition of existing political institutions and/or military resources. Instead, Mohammed gradually built a grassroots army through the conversion of individuals to his religious

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<sup>32</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 16

<sup>33</sup> See *Ibid.* Christianity, had already spread into Europe, and was competing with Zoroastrianism as the most prominent religion in the Middle East. Judaism remained popular in the Levant; however, it was somewhat confined to a particular ethnic group.

<sup>34</sup> Rickard, J.A. and Hyma, Albert. *An Outline of Ancient, Medieval and Modern History*, p. 92

<sup>35</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 16 The Byzantine Empire was the result of the Roman Empire dividing into sections. Co-emperors governed from Rome in the western half of the empire, and Byzantium in the eastern half. The eastern empire survived after Rome fell around 476 AD.

<sup>36</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 27-29

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

philosophy.<sup>38</sup> His beliefs, combined with military victories, led to the influence necessary for religion to naturally conflagrate itself through the traditional means of war, trade, and commerce. Islam formed around Mohammed's reputation and leadership, and those closest to him were the religious scholars tasked with communicating his message.<sup>39</sup> In the wake of Mohammed's death in 632 AD, dispute regarding the succession of religious authority resulted in the establishment of two Islamic sects, Sunni and Shia.<sup>40</sup> This fractionalization of Islam created the two significant identities that are still influencing events in the present. As the influence of the religion spread throughout the region, Sunni and Shiite factions warred with one another over the inheritance of Mohammed's religious authority, while new threats began to emerge in the west.<sup>41</sup>

In the late 11<sup>th</sup> century AD, Christian kingdoms in Europe were uniting under Papal authority to gain control over their holy sites in Palestine during the decline of the Seljuk Empire.<sup>42</sup> The death of prominent Seljuk rulers, combined with internal revolts by provincial leaders, resulted in the loss of the holy land during the First Crusade. The retreat of the Seljuks allowed influential family dynasties and Muslim caliphs to fill the political vacuum, eventually pushing the influence of the religion across North Africa and up into Spain.<sup>43</sup> During the Middle Ages, the Middle East experienced both Christian invaders from the west and Mongol invaders from the east. For local caliphs and ruling families, political and military unity was essential. However, common religion facilitated the formation of alliances against foreign invaders, despite Islam's sectarian divisions. The external threats faced during this period likely solidified Islam's place as the preeminent religious identity in the region, as Muslim armies conscripted Indigenous followers and continual war temporarily suspended sectarian infighting. In 1299 AD, the Muslim armies of the Ottoman Turks captured the Byzantine capital, Constantinople. The powerful clan went on to establish an Empire that existed until their defeat in The Great War (WWI) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 16-17

<sup>39</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 27-29

<sup>40</sup> See\_ Mandaville. *Global Political Islam* p. 28,39\_The Sunni sect developed from those that believed Abu Bakr was Mohammed's rightful heir because the Muslim community chose him. The Shi'ite sect believed the leadership should remain in Mohammed's family, favoring the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law.

<sup>41</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 22,23

<sup>42</sup> See\_ Ibid, p. 25\_The Seljuks were a Turko-Persian Empire that occupied the territory from Eastern Anatolia, west to the Hindu Kush.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> See\_ Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 27-34\_The Muslim "gunpowder empires" emerged

Due to its violent history, the territorial boundaries of the region were continually changing due to conflict. In such a vast and diverse landscape, empires often appointed governors from influential tribes and/or families within the various territories of concern. Without the state structure observed today, boundaries between ethnicities and cultures were usually geographic, and for the sake of stability, empires preferred the establishment of local fiefdoms by minority communities rather than attempt to force their own political and religious norms. Any religious or political change that did occur was gradual, the result of an exposure to new ideas due to war, trade, and commerce. Today, unique tribal, religious, and ethnic affiliations within communities still persist, influencing political perspectives and loyalties within the population of each state. Even though Muslims are a large majority in the region, the ethnic identities are perhaps the most ingrained given that they predate the advent of Islam.<sup>46</sup>

### *Post Ottoman Middle East*

The birth of the state system began in Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. A religious struggle between Protestants and Catholics resulted in the Thirty Years Wars. The Peace of Westphalia that followed established fixed territorial boundaries, transforming the ethnic and religiously bound feudal lands of the Holy Roman Empire into a system of states. As newly sovereign states in Europe balanced one another and sought to gain advantage over their rivals, the fierce competition for interests eventually spread throughout the Mediterranean.

Despite the religious and territorial uncertainty of 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe, the Ottoman Empire experiencing a period of wealth and expansion.<sup>47</sup> As competition between European states increased, they sought stability and strength by accumulating Ottoman gold. The European accomplished this by exporting a variety of goods to the Ottoman Empire. For the Ottomans, the imperial government could increase its security and economic interests by improving diplomatic relations with Europe, while also flooding markets with taxable commodities from Europe. The

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out of the Middle Ages, named for the technology that aided their rise to preeminence. The Mughal Empire (1526–1857) ruled over the Indian sub-continent. The Safavid Empire (1501-1736) extended from modern day Iran, covering most of Iraq, and north into the caucuses.

<sup>45</sup> See\_Ibid. At its height, the Ottoman Empire governed most of modern Greece, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, the Levant, and across North Africa.

<sup>46</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, p. 16

<sup>47</sup> See\_Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 48-51.\_ In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottomans spread into the Balkans and Eastern Europe, and captured port cities on the coasts of Spain and Italy.

Ottoman strategy was to offer European states trade capitulations, allowing merchants special legal, commercial, and even religious rights. As a result, European merchants established communities throughout the Ottoman Empire, providing a foundation for what would evolve into European colonialism.<sup>48</sup>

The economic prosperity of the Ottomans waned by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The discovery of the new world across the Atlantic allowed European states to acquire alternative resources, decreasing the demand for trade with the empire.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, several significant military defeats in the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe led to a significant loss of territory. The result of the economic and military setbacks weakened the legitimacy of the imperial government, causing provincial governors to contemplate secession from the Empire. Sensing the retreat of Ottoman power, European states started to encroach on provinces along the Empire's periphery.

By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, France began to turn its attention to the Ottoman province in North Africa. In the midst of revolution and following significant losses of their colonial territory in the new world, the French needed to secure resources to meet the demands of its growing population.<sup>50</sup> After a successful invasion, the French tried to negotiate a deal with the Ottoman Empire. However, the economic consequences of the French invasion caused a sharp rise in coffee and grain prices within the Empire, threatening to cause further instability. As a result, the Ottomans sent Albanian general Mehmet Ali to retake Egypt with the help of British forces in 1801.<sup>51</sup> Expelling the French put Egypt back under Ottoman hegemony; however, Mehmet Ali had to put down the remnants of a former Egyptian dynasty before he could secure governorship over the province.<sup>52</sup>

Under Ali's rule, Egyptian economic and military strength expanded rapidly. However, the newfound autonomy of the province undermined the legitimacy of Ottoman Empire, and threatened the interests of Europe's colonial powers. In 1838, an alliance of British and Ottoman

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<sup>48</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 48-51

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 54

<sup>50</sup> See Ibid. Over-crowding in French cities, combined with an inadequate food supply was an important factor that contributed to the French Revolution in 1789. That same year, Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt under orders from the French Revolutionary Directorate.

<sup>51</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 54, 55

<sup>52</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt's Political Economy: Power Relations in Development*, (The American University in Cairo, Cairo, 2009) p. 61\_ Mehmet Ali, also known as "Muhammad Ali"

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 25, 26, 62, 63\_ The Mamluks were a land-owning elite in Egypt during the Ottoman Empire.

forces defeated Mehmet Ali, and forced him to accept the terms of an Anglo-Ottoman Convention.<sup>54</sup> The agreement opened the Egyptian economy to the global market, allowing Europeans to dump finished goods into Egypt, while protecting their own markets from Egyptian imports. As the economic conditions in Egypt deteriorated, a nationalist revolt sought to rid Egypt of external influences. However, the British intervened, putting down the insurrection in 1882 to protect their political allies. The result was land-owning elites consolidating economic and political power, as Britain engineered Egypt's agricultural sector exclusively for the export of cotton. British control over Egyptian political and economic institutions prevented local intervention or involvement, leading to stratification within the social classes. The Ottoman leader and British ally, Khedive Isma'îl, invested heavily in agricultural and infrastructure prior to World War I, but falling demand for Egyptian cotton forced him to take out loans from the British to finish uncompleted projects.<sup>55</sup> When the economy did not recover, Khedive Isma'îl had to sell shares of the Suez Canal to pay the British back.<sup>56</sup> Because colonial Britain already established political and economic ties in Egypt, the declaration of Egypt's independence in 1922 did little to change the political and economic conditions for the local population.<sup>57</sup> The Muhammad Ali dynasty still ruled Egypt as a monarchy, and the structure of Egypt's political institutions and lack of diversity within the economy made the state vulnerable to dominance by ruling elites.

During the Ottoman demise, the provinces became increasingly hard to govern given the different ethnic, religious, and linguistic divisions within the population. The geographic barriers between these groups and their population centers gave local rulers an element of autonomy. This allowed them to pursue their own political and economic ambitions. Aware of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire, colonial powers sought to influence provinces on the periphery. However, anxiety over how the empire's demise would affect the balance of power in Europe,

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<sup>54</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt's Political Economy: Power Relations in Development*, p.25-28

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 25-28

<sup>56</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 93\_The Caisse de la Dette was a European agency that oversaw Egyptian finances for debt repayment, and controlled 50 percent of all Egyptian revenue. The Caisse passed the 1880 Law of Liquidation, forcing Egypt to forfeit all revenue from imports, customs, railroads, telegraphs, and the port of Alexandria. It also reinstituted taxes on privately owned land.

<sup>57</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt's Political Economy*, p. 29

colonial powers tried on several occasions to preserve the imperial government's integrity. However, the rise of Germany did destabilize Europe, setting the stage for the Great War.<sup>58</sup>

### *Post WWI, the League of Nations, and the Birth of States in the Middle East*

The defeat of Germany and its Ottoman allies during WWI, led to the emergence of the United States as a significant international player. Due to lingering competition among states on the European continent, the U.S. proposed the League of Nations to facilitate dialogue between the powers in the aftermath of the war.<sup>59</sup> However, it was not a diplomatic success. Many disagreements over the fate of Europe and the Ottoman Empire threatened the post war peace. Despite Assyrians, Armenians, Kurds, Arabs, and Jews, all making demands for sovereignty and self-determination, the League of Nations proceeded with the territorial partition of the Middle East.<sup>60</sup> Unlike the birth of the states in Europe, which divided territory around feudal systems with ethnic, cultural, and religious continuity, the European states divided the spoils of the Ottoman Empire according to their own interests.<sup>61</sup>

Since the United States was not a colonial power, it opposed the allocation of economically desirable territory to Russia and European states. Instead, the U.S. hoped to gain international influence and political capital by encouraging self-determination.<sup>62</sup> If deployed effectively, the self-determination message would appeal to local populations in the United States and Europe, as well as in the Middle East. In doing so, colonial powers might have more difficulty expanding their influence over the economically desirable territories.<sup>63</sup> To counter this U.S. policy, Britain, France, and Russia attempted to support the self-determination narrative, while secretly making plans to divide specific areas amongst themselves.<sup>64</sup> To satisfy the self-determination demands of the United States, the League of Nations left the Arabian Peninsula under the control of the Saudi dynasty. Perhaps colonial powers did not view the territory as

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<sup>58</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 59. \_ Message from British Government to the Russians and Ottomans in the late 1830s, "His majesty's government attach great importance to the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, considering that state to be a material element in the general balance of power in Europe."

<sup>59</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 180

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 47,48

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 180-183

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

desirable due to the lack of resources and complicated religious/tribal dynamics surrounding Islam's holy sites. Furthermore, the location was far from the Mediterranean, and with the Suez Canal facilitating trade from the Far East, post war Europe did not appear to exhibit much enthusiasm about investing in the arid interior.<sup>65</sup>

Russia's interests in the Ottoman Empire lay in acquiring access to warm water port in Turkey, and control over the Turkish Straits. The straits were significant to Russian interests due to the fact that during that time, 40 percent of Russian exports passed through the Bosphorus. Russia also wanted to gain influence over the Baltic region, giving Russia security on its southern border close to Europe, and additional access to the Mediterranean.<sup>66</sup>

The French, on the other hand, had historic claims to territories that make up present-day Syria and Lebanon, as many Maronite Christians of French origin made up a minority of that population. The League of Nations mandate gave them political influence those territories. Convenient, as many the economic benefits of the territory included previous French investments in their rail lines and silk production during the Ottoman period.<sup>67</sup>

Concerning Britain, their primary interests in the post WWI Middle East was securing trade routes to protect their valuable trade interests with India. However, Britain also had invested heavily in Egypt's agricultural during the Ottoman era, particularly to influence the trade of Egyptian cotton.<sup>68</sup> Britain saw the Middle East's fledgling governments as a means to spread its influence and secure access to potentially profitable areas that could be attractive for future investments. While oil's international value was not yet fully realized, Britain did understand its potential military benefits. This, combined with their lack of domestic sources of petroleum, drove their initiative to invest political and economic capital in the region following WWI. As a result, British advisers retained colonial style influence over governments in Jordan, Iraq, and much of what is now Israel and the Palestinian territories.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 175-185

<sup>66</sup> See *Ibid*, p. 178\_ Before the end of the war, secret negotiations between the entente powers were able to prevent Russia from gaining control over parts of Turkey and the Bosphorus

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 177

<sup>68</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt's Political Economy*, p. 25-30\_ Although Egypt was not part of the British mandate, their debts were such that they became a British client state.

<sup>69</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 182\_ A key British ally, Amir Faysal was part of the Hashemite family from Saudi Arabia. During the Arab revolts against the Ottomans, Faysal occupied Damascus. Following the war, the League of Nations mandates gave Syria to the French, removing Faysal from power. In response, Faysal's brother, Abdallah, mobilized an army from Mecca to retake Damascus. To avoid war, the British convinced Abdallah to stay in Amman by giving them territory in Trans-Jordan.



The history of the region is significant because it reveals the various cultural, political, and religious influences on populations that cultivated the *suprastate identities* that remain relevant, despite the recent structural transformations in the international system. While Islam did act as a unifying force to expel foreign invaders during the crusades, the religious continuity did not help the Ottomans during the decline of their empire. Competition in Europe caused those states to aggressively pursue interests in the new world and on the Ottoman periphery. As they grew in strength, the weakening economy of the empire caused provincial governors to begin to act with more autonomy. For fear of what the demise of the empire would mean for Europe, colonial powers had to intervene to stabilize the imperial government. When the balance of power did shift in Europe, WWI sealed the empire's fate, leaving the League of Nations to decide how to divide territory. With the formation of state boundaries, communities no longer enjoyed the semi-autonomous existence they had under the empires. Instead, the reorganization of the region forced them to confront new "state centric" identities and interests, resulting in many of the modern domestic challenges within Middle Eastern states.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The State System**

Following the League of Nation mandates and the establishment of state borders in the former Ottoman Empire, the Middle East was still reeling from the political and economic consequences of the war. The war caused severe famine, political turmoil, and economic devastation. Without Ottoman hegemony, there was no longer a political framework uniting the different ethnic populations that once coexisted under the empire. As a result, varieties of nationalism- Turkish nationalism, Arab nationalism, Egyptian nationalism, Syrian nationalism, and so on- spread throughout the region.<sup>70</sup> However, the mandates prevented these movements from becoming a threat, as locals did not have the economic or military resources necessary to mobilize the population and force political change. State-building efforts were undertaken by the foreign powers, and local economies were bound to European governments. The situation created an unfavorable economic climate that stifled growth and discouraged any private investments. With advances in technology in Europe and the United States, private companies were taking advantage of the discovery of oil in the region; however, their investments provided minimal returns to local communities. During WWII, the British fortified Egypt to protect their economic interests along the Nile, on the Mediterranean, and in Iraq. However, the grip of colonialism started to slip as the war raged on in Europe. As a result, ethnic, religious, and nationalist movements began forming within the populations, creating a combustible political environment for local governments on the verge of autonomy.

### *The Advent of Mechanized Warfare and the Geopolitics of Oil*

Today, oil is one of the most valuable commodities in the world. However, the oil industry in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was only becoming relevant in Europe, Russia, and the United States. With WWI and the industrial revolution spurring development within these states, advancements in technology led to a realization of the commercial and military benefits associated with petroleum based energy. Since locating, extracting, and refining the resource was a complicated and expensive process, local oil reserves within U.S. states were enough to sustain the industry's gradual growth.<sup>71</sup> For Britain; however, the colonial tendencies associated with

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<sup>70</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p.\_ 173 Zionism was also a significant movement after WWI; however, the Jewish people were among many other ethnic groups that didn't get the chance for self-determination.

<sup>71</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War: How the Global Energy Trade Slipped from America's Grasp*. (Casey Research,

power projection and influence depended on an ability to modernize their military. The invention of internal four-stroke combustible engines changed everything. Liquid fuel made steam engines obsolete, creating the opportunity for innovation in the production of small vehicles, ships, and aircraft.<sup>72</sup>

As the industry expanded, U.S. businessmen, geologists, and investors were drawn to oil by demands associated with new technology. Due to the small size of the British Isles and its limited domestic resources, British power and influence depended heavily on naval reach. As a result, the British were particularly interested in understanding the capabilities of oil as a military necessity. The early trials and errors with the production and refinement of oil in the United States led to advancements in capabilities. As U.S. oil companies expanded, foreign governments sought their expertise for locating, extracting, and refining the resource.<sup>73</sup>

By the time WWII started, technological advances enabled highly mechanized military forces on land, air, and sea. The demand for these vehicles was such that it had a dramatic effect on International Relations in relation to oil. In response to this evolution in technology, the United States and the czarist government in Russia prioritized the location and production of oil within their large sovereign territories.<sup>74</sup> Spurred by the demands of both the private and the public sector, U.S. oil firms helped spur the advancement of the industry, and eventually exported their services and expertise to Russia and the Middle East. Without the same territorial luxuries, Britain used their old colonial ties to advance the discovery and production outside their sovereign boundaries in an attempt to secure access to the resource.<sup>75</sup>

Oil was so essential during WWII that much of the Axis and Allied strategy in the war evolved around securing the resource, or cutting off the enemy's supply. While Germany's quick military build-up and technological advancements before WWII was impressive, they lacked an

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<sup>72</sup> See *Ibid* p. 144-145 \_ During WWI, Britain invented mechanized warfare by developing the first tanks. The mechanized weapon platform could traverse harsh terrain and the barbed wire fortifications that characterized recent trench warfare. Coal burning ships were also slow and cumbersome, since solid fuel had to be manually fed into furnaces to power steam engines. Ships running on petroleum could move farther and faster, and for a greater period of time. With the emergence of mechanized warfare during WWI, states were quick to realize the effect and potential of such assets on the battlefield.

<sup>73</sup> See *Ibid* p. 45-46 \_ At the time, the oil industry dominated by a group of companies known as the Seven Sisters: Standard Oil of New York, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Standard Oil of California, Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Gulf Oil, Royal Dutch Shell, and Texaco.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, p. 42

<sup>75</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 144, 145

adequate domestic oil supply. By allying itself with Italy and quickly initiating a campaign in North Africa, the Nazis attempted to seize control of newly discovered sources of oil to secure a supply line of the resource to their forces in Europe.<sup>76</sup> When that campaign failed, Germany had little choice but to advance into the Soviet Union to secure their reserves. After being pushed out of Africa and unable to subdue the Soviet Union, the Nazis simply did not have the fuel to sustain campaigns on multiple fronts. In short, WWII revealed that a state's military capabilities were dependent upon its ability to secure reliable sources and supply lines for oil.<sup>77</sup>

### *Post World War II*

Following World War II, Middle Eastern states geographically located on the perimeter of the region, like Turkey, Israel, and Iran, advanced more rapidly due to their strategic economic and military value. With proximity to Europe and the Soviet Union, external states had interests in their stability and development.<sup>78</sup> However, the rest of the region had yet to adjust to the transition away from empire and the economic exploitation associated with colonialism. When began, Germany immediately took interest in the Middle East due to the discovery of oil, as much of their access to the resource depended upon their ability to procure it outside of their own sovereign territory. In the initial stages of the conflict, Britain sought to protect its interest in the Middle East by investing in local infrastructure to aid in the movement of military equipment and facilities in the region.<sup>79</sup> After the allies pushed the Germans out of North Africa, the focus of the war shifted back to Europe. As a result, former benefactors became less concerned about the political and economic development of Middle Eastern states.<sup>80</sup> With few political avenues of recourse, unaddressed grievances continued to divide regional populations along ethnic and religious lines. In contrast, those same populations were lax in accepting the legitimacy of local ruling elites.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 46

<sup>77</sup> See Ibid, p. 46, 47\_ Even in the Pacific, within hours of the attack on the U.S. Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Japan initiated an invasion of Indonesia to secure the large oil reserves in the Dutch East Indies.

<sup>78</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 34

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 61

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, p. 34

The destruction in Europe during WWII caused many of the post-war powers to retreat and focus most of their resources on their own reconstruction. The retreat of European influence led to declarations of independence in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, as well as the formation of the Jewish state of Israel. While the U.S. and European allies endorsed the establishment of Israel, the post-war powers were not interested in intervening militarily on its behalf. Israel's sudden existence displaced Palestinian communities, angering Arab populations throughout the region. Without fear of U.S. or European military reprisal, fledgling Middle Eastern regimes saw an opportunity to take advantage of nationalist sentiments and expand their legitimacy.

With holy sites from a number of different religions present in the Levant, many religious and ethnic identities made, and continue to make, historical claims over the territory (*irredentism*). The creation of a Jewish state in 1948 is significant because it granted sovereignty to a single identity. Arab *Irredentism* made opposing the creation of a Jewish state not only politically popular for a regime, but a means of securing additional legitimacy.<sup>82</sup> In a sudden display of unity, populations did rally behind their governments in opposition to Israel. However, the loss of the Arab-Israeli war and the loss of Palestine only increased public discontent, destabilizing the regimes that took part in the invasion.<sup>83</sup>

While the survival of Israel likely contributed to the overthrow of the Egyptian Monarchy, it taught new regimes the value of highlighting external threats to deflect internal opposition. With the presence of Israel, *duality* became a cornerstone for future Arab foreign policies. Deflecting internal hostilities with anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist rhetoric also fed into nationalist sentiments, giving regimes temporary flexibility to pursue regional interests by exporting blame and unifying the center.<sup>84</sup>

### *Arab Autonomy within the State System*

Without adequate legitimacy, ruling family dynasties and/or oligarchies had to act quickly to validate their right to rule. However, by 1958, military coups disposed of regimes in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. The economic consequences of colonialism left every regime in the region vulnerable, as grievances among the population remained unaddressed. As a result, the

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 8-10

burden fell on regimes to attempt to quickly establish an institutional political hierarchy to govern and execute policy.<sup>85</sup> The additional military capabilities and diminished presence of European influences led to an increase in regional competition and autonomy, as regimes sought to unify their populations and legitimize their rule by aggressively advancing their interests.

From 1945 to 1955, King Abdullah of Jordan instigated instability in the region when he began promoting his ambitions for a "Greater Syria". Before and immediately after the 1948 Arab invasion of Israel, King Abdullah discreetly negotiated with Israel to secure a treaty that would guarantee peace and allow Jordan to absorb much of the Palestinian territory in the West Bank.<sup>86</sup> Britain and other western benefactors encouraged the geopolitical maneuver, but Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria, recognized Jordan's motivations. To counter Jordan, the other states began cooperating to effectively balance warming relations between Jordan and Israel. Jordan's negotiations with Israel initiated autonomous state behavior within the new state system. During the Cold War, regional coalitions became common as states balanced one another and pursued interests.<sup>87</sup>

Currently, the region continues to witness coalitions and counter coalitions. These conditional alliances often form and dissipate as states attempt to prevent the rise of a regional hegemon.<sup>88</sup> While these interactions remain characteristic of a multi-polar state system, they also communicate a mutual acknowledgement of one another's legitimacy. This was significant during the Cold War because it indicated a shift in regional relations. Without a reliance on external benefactors, states undertook more complex policy initiatives to advance interests beyond their own sovereign territory.<sup>89</sup>

During the Cold War, much of the world was choosing sides between East (communism) and West (capitalism). Instead of choosing this more aggregate policy approach, Middle Eastern regimes took advantage of these international conditions while focusing on regional affairs. They accumulated influence and legitimacy by using the superpowers at their convenience. As states

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<sup>85</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 10-12

<sup>86</sup> Ibid, p. 34, 35

<sup>87</sup> Walt, Stephen. *The Origin of Alliances*, (Cornell University Press, NY, 1987) \_Additional balancing examples include: The Baghdad Pact (1955 - '58), Arab Solidarity Pact (1955 - '56), Kings' Alliance (1957 - '58), Eastern Command (1969 - '70), October War Coalition (1971 - '73), Steadfast Front (1978 - '82)

<sup>88</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 34\_ Such rules infer that, while pursuing interests, no state should endanger the vital interests of its neighbors for the sake of its own security.

<sup>89</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 34-36

balanced on another, they also used nationalist and/or anti-imperial rhetoric to divert local discontent.<sup>90</sup> The multi-polar state activity and continual state maneuvering during this period also facilitated the relevance of ethnic and state-centric identities.

Egypt was still under British influence during WWII. Due to the importance of oil and the German campaign in North Africa, the British military fortified Egypt to protect its interest in the region. With military hardware and British training, the Egyptian military became a powerful institution. The post-WWII situation in the Middle East was unique because of the sudden departure of European influence. Unlike the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the end of WWII saw newly independent regimes having to seek legitimacy and security in a state system with limited external influence.

Even as U.S. and Soviet interests led to greater external influence the region, their approach was very different than the Europeans during the colonial period. Perhaps due to the global scale of the rivalry and/or the concern of provoking a military response, the superpowers refrained from occupying states to force regime change. Instead, they attempted to secure beneficial relationships in the region using military and economic aid. In this way, the superpowers could guarantee the security of an ally, while maintaining a defensive posture.<sup>91</sup> The military regime in Egypt took advantage of this approach, obtaining significant economic and military aid from the U.S and the Soviets. The rivalry had significant influence on the current military regime in Egypt, as the political and economic infrastructure of the state evolved around their ability to remain an important factor in the interests of external states.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>91</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-264

<sup>92</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Egypt: From Eternal Stability to Turmoil". *Geopolitical Diary*, April 2012.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-egypt-eternal-stability-turmoil>

### Chapter 3

#### The Establishment of the Civil-Military Regime

The previous chapters described the emergence of identities, the evolution of the region into a system of states, and how internal instability and the absence of external influences following WWII led to greater autonomy. The following chapter looks at the formation and structure of the Egyptian military regime to better understand the current stability of the military establishment and the challenges facing political liberalization.

Over the course of Egypt's recent history, the pursuit of interests led to the evolution of a very unique political landscape and institutional infrastructure heavily influenced by the military. While Egypt's interests remain relatively consistent, the transition away from the Ottoman Empire following World War I, the colonial influences of European states prior to WWII, and the Cold War and post-Cold War eras, led to many fluctuations in international and regional dynamics. The current Egyptian state is a result of the regime attempting to secure its interests while navigating the changing conditions.<sup>93</sup> After overthrowing a relic Ottoman monarchy following WWII, a group of military officers became the ruling elite. Steve Cook in *Ruling not Governing*, talks about how the military reformed the political system and governing body, while also transforming the economic infrastructure of Egypt through the nationalization of various industries, institutions, and resources.<sup>94</sup> For the purpose of stability, interests, and survival, the nature of the *military regime* changed over time, requiring military leaders to resign from military service to take specific positions within government and economic institutions.<sup>95</sup> Those that heavily influence the policy and decision making process of the state are an older generation of high ranking military officers and former military known as the *old guard*.<sup>96</sup> They hold prominent positions in the military, government, on boards, and in various institutions or councils, often overseeing the implementation of policy within their respective roles.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 100

<sup>94</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing: The Military and Political Development in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey*, (The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 2007), p. 63-92

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p. 64

<sup>96</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report. *Analysis*. March, 2011. <https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/evolving-modern-egyptian-republic-special-report>

<sup>97</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament" (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Washington, DC 2014) [http://carnegieendowment.org/files/post\\_mubarak\\_predicament.pdf](http://carnegieendowment.org/files/post_mubarak_predicament.pdf)



In accordance with interests and necessity, the Egyptian regime continued to change. The regime attempted to shed the responsibilities of daily governance, while maintaining a monopoly on policy and decision-making. Due to careful legal manipulation, the regime carefully instituted reforms to privatize the economy and democratize government. The nationalized industries became private holding companies owned and managed by individuals loyal to the military. Similarly, the regime put different political institutions under the supervision of military affiliates, or provided legal authority to parallel military institutions. Steven Cook's work refers to these political and economic entities as *military fiefdoms*.<sup>98</sup> The fiefdoms allowed the military oversight over essential political and economic sectors of the state. As the bureaucracy developed, the regime also populated it with former military officials or military affiliates. The *military establishment* describes the collection of all these military related entities across the security, economic and political infrastructure of the state.<sup>99</sup>

The foundation of the present political system in Egypt is the result of a military coup orchestrated by a group of mid-ranking officers on July 23, 1952.<sup>100</sup> In order to maintain control over the government, the Free Officers, led by Gamal Nasser and Muhammad Naguib, had to quickly develop a strategy to gain legitimacy and marginalize potential opponents. Within months, they abolished the constitution, dissolved the existing parliament, outlawed political parties, exiled King Farouk, and declared a three-year period of transitional military rule under the newly formed Revolutionary Command Council.<sup>101</sup> As native Egyptians from the middle and lower classes, the Free Officers relied upon their left-wing ideology and Arab-Nationalist identities to garner temporary domestic support and legitimacy. The RCC reinforced this by implementing an agrarian reform that limited the amount of land an individual could own to 80 hectares (then down to 20 hectares in 1969), confiscating the additional land from the landowning elites to redistribute to those among the lower classes. The RCC also nationalized a variety of industries, putting military officers in charge of a growing public sector while seizing the economic pillars that sustained the former elites.<sup>102</sup> Nasser oversaw the implementation of

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<sup>98</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>99</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, 63-92

<sup>100</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report". *Analysis*, March, 2011.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/evolving-modern-egyptian-republic-special-report>

<sup>101</sup> See\_ Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, p.64

The Free Officers Movement overthrew an Ottoman dynasty that had ruled Egypt since 1805

<sup>102</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

these domestic policies, allowing him and his allies to consolidate control over the Egyptian economy and fortify influence over the country's only post-Nasser political party, the Liberation Rally.<sup>103</sup> However, disagreements over these policies and the future of Egypt eventually led to the RCC's discrediting of many key military members. In 1955, Nasser's influence over the RCC got him appointed President until the RCC finished the constitution, and the National Union party replaced the Liberation Rally as the state's only political party.<sup>104</sup> During a national referendum in 1956, the RCC announced the new constitution and Gamal Nasser won the Presidential election. These events led to the dissolution of the RCC, and coincided with the end of the three-year transitional period since the formal end of the monarchy.<sup>105</sup>

With dissolution of the RCC, the military officers that supported Nasser resigned from their military posts to take positions at the top of the recently nationalized industries. Nasser's first initiative was to nationalize the Suez Canal Company, instigating the 1956 war. That conflict pitted Nasser against Israel and the former colonial powers of France and Britain. Having already removed the former Egyptian elite, Nasser's decision to challenge the interests of former colonial powers made Nasser a national hero and a champion of Arab-nationalism.<sup>106</sup> With this rise in regional prestige, Nasser attempted to merge Syria and Yemen into a United Arab Republic (UAR); however, only Syria agreed to the terms. With his influence over Damascus, Nasser attempted to extend his influence into Iraq by engineering a coup to overthrow its leader, Abdel-Kareem Qasim. With Egypt dominating the governance and foreign policy of the UAR, members of the local Syrian army began to resent their client-state position under Nasser. In 1961, they expelled the Egyptians and declared their independence.<sup>107</sup>

For the Egyptian military establishment, a successful resolution to the Suez Crisis led to an increase in regional legitimacy, and secured additional economic and security benefits for the state. However, the failure of the UAR had the opposite effect. Rifts began to form within the military's ranks, as many within the institution and among the population questioned Nasser's leadership. As a result, Nasser purged the military those who opposed him by dissolving the National Union. Nasser replaced the National Union with the Arab Socialist Union, populating it

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<sup>103</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>104</sup> Farah, Nadia R. Egypt's *Political Economy*, p.72, 73\_Nasser was able to undermine Muhammad Naguib's legitimacy by appealing to the military's desires for greater influence in the new government.

<sup>105</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>106</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 100-101

<sup>107</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

with military officers loyal to him while tightening the military's grip on government.<sup>108</sup> The new platform of this party sought to boost domestic support for Nasser, and it did so by nationalizing more private industries and expanding social benefits.<sup>109</sup> The newly nationalized industries went to Nasser's political/military allies, enhancing the Egyptian military's influence over the state's economy.<sup>110</sup> The drastic reforms required a new constitution, so Nasser formed a 250 member preparatory committee that would draft the constitution and lay the foundation for the establishment of a National Congress of Popular Forces. The intent of the congress was to give the impression of the inclusiveness by allocating seats to different segments of the working-class of society. However, the regime set aside 50 percent of the seats to workers within a public sector already heavily influenced by the regime.<sup>111</sup>

While trying to manage domestic affairs, Egypt also had to respond to two significant regional events. The successful coup in Iraq brought a pro-Egyptian government to power. As a result, Nasser reignited talks of another Pan-Arab government in an attempt to further Egyptian influence over the region.<sup>112</sup> The unity government did not materialize; however, because the new Iraqi government refused to accept Nasser's terms. In Yemen, a pro-Egyptian government was under attack from supporters of an exiled religious leader, Imam, backed by Saudi Arabia.<sup>113</sup>

Saudi Arabia supported popular Islamist groups in Egypt that consistently made attempts to undermine Nasser's political legitimacy, and other nationalist movements/governments in the region. To counter the threat of Islamic influences in Egypt, Nasser initiated crackdowns of the Saudi sponsored groups in Egypt. One such group was the Muslim Brotherhood, and Nasser's contempt for the organization was a result of their popularity among the Egyptian population which challenged his own nationalist agendas in the region. Being an Egyptian ally, the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) appealed to Nasser for assistance, and as civil conflict ensued, Egypt and Saudi Arabia became locked in a taxing proxy war in the 1960s.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>109</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 100-101\_Nasser was able to pay for extensive social programs due to the influx of economic and military aid coming from U.S. and the Soviet Union, allowing him to secure domestic support while advancing the regime's security interests.

<sup>110</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt's Political Economy*, p. 74, 75

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>113</sup> See\_Ibid. \_Muhammad al-Badr was an influential Imam exiled from Yemen due to the threat he posed to the secular regime.

<sup>114</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

By failing to unite Egypt and Iraq, and stuck in an unfavorable situation in Yemen, Nasser began to face opposition from some of his closest military supporters who had been with him since the Free Officers Movement.<sup>115</sup> Furthermore, the bureaucracy The National Congress created competing political and economic factions within the heavily regulated system, resulting in corruption and administrative inefficiencies. The combination of government mismanagement and the squandering of resources in Yemen caused the economic situation to quickly deteriorate. The Egyptian defeat at the hands of Israel in the 1967 war was yet another significant blow to the credibility of the military establishment. Public outrage and large anti-government demonstrations prompted Nasser to have to reshuffle the political/military leadership and rethink the military's role in governance.<sup>116</sup>

After the 1967 war, Nasser relieved a number of generals of their command, and introduced a reform known as the March 30 program.<sup>117</sup> The program was an effort by Nasser to distance the military from the responsibilities directly associated with governance. Perhaps, Nasser believed that the combined military and political responsibilities diminished the military's professionalism, threatening the security interests of the state. From this initiative, Nasser enacted a law in 1968 specifically designed to separate the military from formal government posts. However, because the Israelis still occupied the Sinai, Nasser wanted to ensure the military did not lose its influence over policy and decision making. The military retained its privileged position in the state by filling the key government positions with civilians closely associated with the military establishment.<sup>118</sup> In this way, the military could focus on matters of state security, while having significant oversight over Egypt's governing body. When Nasser died of a heart attack in 1970, Vice President Anwar Sadat assumed the role of President.<sup>119</sup>

### *Sadat and the Military Elite*

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<sup>115</sup> See *Ibid.* \_Anwar Sadat was among a few of the Officers beginning to question Nasser's policies in the 1960s

<sup>116</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, 66-68

<sup>117</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>118</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, 66-68

<sup>119</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

When Sadat assumed leadership, his first order of business was to solidify his leadership through the “Corrective Revolution”, designed to purge the government and military of Nasser loyalist, replacing them by promoting others from within the officer corps that would be loyal to him.<sup>120</sup> After reorganizing these positions, Sadat prepared a military operation in collaboration with Syria, and made a military deal with the Soviets to help him rebuild and resupply his military. The objective of Egypt and Syria was to regain lost territory from the 1967 war, specifically the Sinai and Golan Heights. The surprise invasion temporarily caught the Israelis off guard, and the Egyptian military advanced through the Sinai and over the Suez Canal facing only limited resistance.<sup>121</sup> However, the Israeli counter-offensive took a toll on the Syrian military, and the Israelis were pressing the Egyptian lines almost to the point of breaking, encircling Egypt’s Third Army in the city of Suez. The Egyptians regained the Sinai, and the Israelis had little desire to continue the fight to try to take it back. The October War ended in a ceasefire with both sides declaring victory. By successfully retaking the Sinai, Sadat earned the loyalty of a previously divided military, and gained considerable influence domestically and across the region.<sup>122</sup>

With the loyalty of the military and support of the Egyptian people, Sadat declared an economic “Infitah” in 1974, presenting it as a shift away from socialism.<sup>123</sup> The new policy also conveniently allowed Sadat to purge Nasserist elements in the military and government, using economic liberalization as a method to remove and replace those elements from key positions at the top of Egypt’s nationalized industries. The symbolic shift away from socialism also led to the acquisition of a new economic and military benefactor in the United States, and more significant shifts in the structure of Egypt’s political, economic, and military society.

Sadat’s overhaul of Egyptian society included the creation of a new party in 1976, The National Democratic Party, to replace Nasser’s ASU. By 1977, Sadat implemented Law 40, legalizing the formation of additional political parties.<sup>124</sup> For the military, the combination of Sadat’s purge, the October War victory, and the promise of a new generation of a U.S. trained

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<sup>120</sup> STRATFOR: “The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report”

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, p. 68-70

officer corps elevated their morale and their loyalty to Sadat. As a result, Sadat faced no military opposition to signing the 1978 peace accord and recognizing the state of Israel.<sup>125</sup>

In 1979, Sadat also signed Law 32, intended to further liberalize Egypt's economy. While the intent was to privatize the rest of the state-owned industries, the law essentially gave the military the freedom to engage in business enterprises, while also giving them financial and economic independence from the state. With military and former military in key industry positions, the result was the establishment of quasi-military owned holding companies working with foreign investors. Not only were these immune to certain tax obligations, they actually received subsidies from the government, allowing business associated with the military to take the industry lead in electronics, infrastructure, energy, agribusiness, aviation, tourism, security, and consumer goods.<sup>126</sup>

During Sadat's Presidency, The Defense Ministry began efforts to establish two commercial entities that became significant economic entities within the Egyptian state: The National Services Projects, and the Egyptian Organization for Industrial Development. The organizations negotiated contracts with domestic and international manufacturing firms; thus, former military were able to extract commissions from these joint business ventures. While Nasser initially removed the burden of governance from the military to make it more professional, Sadat's alliance with the United States and peace with Israel caused them to shift their attention, not to security, but rather to economic control.

Early in his Presidency, Sadat also embraced the Islamist identity as the allure of nationalism declined following the 1967 war. With ongoing negotiations between the U.S and Egypt after the October War, perhaps Sadat felt that he needed to prevent the rise of an influential opposition, or co-opt these conservative elements to counter former Nasserist allies and left-wing influences in Egyptian society sympathetic to the Soviet Union. Whatever his motives, Sadat did not pursue the Muslim Brotherhood like his predecessor, instead, he encouraged and embraced their activity.

During the 1970s, political Islamist movements were occurring all over the Middle East as Islamism began to replace the nationalist, Pan-Arab, and Marxist trends of the 1950s and 60s. The regimes identified the Muslim Brotherhood as a more moderate driver of this social movement

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<sup>125</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

by promoting Islamic principles and establishing an institutional presence.<sup>127</sup> Anwar Sadat supported this wave of Islamism and even encouraged the establishment of Islamic groups on university campuses. The Muslim Brotherhood contained influential religious, professional, and academic figures who cleverly targeted the youth and the impoverished. The Brotherhood gained popularity using a sophisticated public relations campaign, focusing on social welfare initiatives to benefit these segments of the population. With limited access to the political arena, the Brotherhood adapted by fulfilling as many community roles as possible.<sup>128</sup>

Still financed by Saudi Arabia, the Brotherhood established a network of business and charitable organizations to fund their social initiatives. In doing so, members of The Brotherhood elevated themselves to prominent and influential positions in Egyptian society, as the global economic recession took its toll on Egypt in the late 70s and into the 80s.<sup>129</sup> By aligning himself with the Islamist identity, Sadat hoped to gain enough domestic support from this movement to navigate recession and limit opposition to foreign policy initiatives that would further the long term security and economic interests of the state.

For the military, there was little opposition to Sadat because the privatization efforts put them in charge of the state's most valuable industries. The financial exemptions given to quasi-military industries allowed many within the military establishment to accumulate wealth without tax obligations to the government.<sup>130</sup> Furthermore, aid from the United States also went directly to the military or through military controlled institutions, and they used these funds to enhance their security capabilities and safeguard their positions in political and economic sectors of society. The institutional links between the military, government, and the business sector, meant that retired military officers could conduct business and influence policy without having to fear a civilian business elite that could challenge their authority or create a rift between the military and the executive branch.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, the structure of government gave the military the ability to dictate the political and economic direction of the state. The more inclusive political arena did nothing to increase civilian influence, but instead, added a buffer between the military and the population that greatly reduced their level of accountability. The newly established

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<sup>127</sup> Mandaville, Peter. *Global Political Islam*, p. 98, 99

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p. 110, 111.

<sup>129</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 100-101

<sup>130</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

bureaucracy shouldered the burden of day-to-day governance but lacked the authority to challenge the military on policy matters.

While Sadat had the support of the military, his initiatives to grow the public and private sector were not yielding results for the rest of the Egyptian population. The increased financial burden on the state during the recession meant that Sadat had to do away with many government subsidies implemented by Nasser. Such austerity measures meant that government would no longer guarantee employment for university graduates, and many well educated Egyptians had trouble finding work. Furthermore, the newfound wealth of the military establishment, combined with the global recession and unsuccessful austerity measures, caused substantial stratification between the social classes. In response to these conditions, the Muslim Brotherhood were able to expand their social network by opening hospitals, charities, schools, and mosques, to provide people with services they could no longer afford.<sup>132</sup>

The bread riots in 1977 tested the stability of the military political/economic institutional conglomerate, revealing both their ability to restore order and to apply pressure on the President for instant changes in policy. The riots started as the result of austerity measures that Sadat deemed necessary for the economic stability of the state; however, they disrupted internal political stability, and the military had to stabilize the situation by quelling the uprising and forcing an end to Sadat's measures.<sup>133</sup> Early attempts to gain domestic favor by co-opting the Islamists worked temporarily; however, his efforts were later undermined by the peace with Israel. The Brotherhood had already capitalized on the regime's austerity measures, furthering their own influence by providing services to the lower classes. As frustration with Sadat's domestic and foreign policies grew, members within the Brotherhood grew displeased with the group's lack of aggressive political activism, and more aggressive splinter groups within the Brotherhood emerged.<sup>134</sup>

### *Mubarak and the Rise of the Business Elite*

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<sup>132</sup> Mandaville, Peter. *Global Political Islam*, p. 83, 84, 108, 109

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.



When the Islamist turned on Sadat and assassinated him in 1981, his successor, Hosni Mubarak solidified the military's predominance over the state by declaring emergency powers and initiating a campaign to pacify radical elements within the state. To preserve the legitimacy of the regime and the political system, Mubarak did release some political prisoners, allowed the establishment of additional political parties, and held parliamentary elections in accordance to Sadat's Law 40 implemented back in 1977. By adding more parties and civilians into the political system, Mubarak could aggressively pursue Islamist elements in society while trying to limit the possibility of a public backlash.<sup>135</sup>

During the early 80s, Tandheem al-Jihad and Gamaa al-Islamiyah were the primary Islamist targets of the regime at the time.<sup>136</sup> The two groups were more violent anti-government offshoots of the Muslim Brotherhood, and as such, they were in competition with one another for religious preeminence within Egyptian society. Parallel to the implementation of emergency powers, Mubarak took advantage of the internal disputes of the Islamists by co-opting the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood would provide information about the activities of other Islamist groups, and in exchange, they could continue to spread their social activities within professional, religious, academic institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs).<sup>137</sup>

While the Muslim Brotherhood remained banned as a political party, Mubarak did allow Muslim Brotherhood members to be candidates in election as members of an existing political party. In 1984, Muslim Brotherhood members won 58 out of 454 available seats as part of a coalition with the Wafd party. As the 80s progressed, the Mubarak security crackdowns against Tandheem al-Jihad and Gamaa al-Islamiyah did weaken their presence within society. However, the Muslim Brotherhood appeared to be making significant gains, attracting additional scrutiny from the regime. Even with the uneasy cooperation between the Brotherhood and the regime, many members of the organization did occasionally get harassed and detained as the military tried to keep their growing influence in check.<sup>138</sup>

Another election in the 80s saw the Muslim Brotherhood and their political allies continue to gain seats in parliament, despite Mubarak's attempts to manipulate the electoral

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<sup>135</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

process to dilute their presence in parliament. As a result, the decade saw one dissolution of parliament, and several squabbles with The Supreme Constitutional Court over the constitutionality of the regime's electoral reforms. By the election in 1990, rulings by the court lifted some restrictions by allowing participation of independent candidates. However, the rulings favored Mubarak, allowing the regime to maintain the political advantage by redrawing the electoral districts.<sup>139</sup>

With every attempt to gain political legitimacy, the military's willingness to uphold the democratic façade allowed opposition groups to slowly gain a more significant presence in government institutions. Since Nasser's Arab Socialists Movement (ASM), the military establishment consolidated the state's decision-makers into a dominant political party. Doing so put former military in key political positions, allowing them to influence policy and oversee its implementation. When Sadat introduced more political parties and expanded the civilian bureaucracy, the old guard's positions in high-office allowed them to maintain their monopoly on policy and decision-making. However, additional democratic reforms under Mubarak increased presence of opposition groups. While the military kept limits to their political influence, the increased presence of opposition in the bureaucracy often translated into public scrutiny.<sup>140</sup> The Islamist presence in government not only allowed them to accuse the NDP of corruption, but their affiliation with the popular Islamic identity gave their voice additional credibility. In 1990, the Islamist opposition's political victories completely destabilized the Algerian regime.<sup>141</sup> Such events only emboldened Egypt's Islamists, and reminded the Mubarak regime of his own vulnerabilities. For the first time, the Egyptian military regime felt the need for influential political allies within the population. Mubarak needed an influential civilian group that had a stake in the maintaining the status quo, but could also work to counter the influence of Islamist groups.<sup>142</sup>

In Egypt, the 1990's saw new initiatives by the Mubarak regime to promote further economic liberalization. The reforms that followed revealed that regime's intent to foster the rise of a business elite, giving industries and private business owners generous concessions in an attempt to facilitate desperately needed economic growth. However, doing this resulted in many

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<sup>139</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>140</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt's Political Economy*, p. 117, 118

<sup>141</sup> Mandaville, Peter. *Global Political Islam*, p. 94

<sup>142</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

political incentives to business owners that allowed them to quickly establish themselves as active participants in the regime. The economic initiatives privatized many state-owned enterprises capable of extracting immediate revenue and attracting foreign investors. In the absence of competition, the reforms privatized near monopolies in the iron, steel, cement, telecommunication, and food & beverage industries, and their association with the regime created many grey areas regarding ownership.<sup>143</sup>

After passing Law 203 in 1991, the Egyptian regime set out to privatize 314 existing state-owned enterprises. According to Carana Corporation, “The law stipulated that ‘holding companies’ (HCs) would replace the ‘Organizations’ of the public sector, and ‘affiliated companies’ (ACs) would replace those supervised by the replaced organization.”<sup>144</sup> Due to the military establishment’s concern regarding the fate of their existing holding companies, approximately 85 companies were exempt from the first round of reforms. Of the remaining state-owned industries targeted in the reform, the regime allowed the government sponsored business elite to take partial ownership of remaining assets.<sup>145</sup> As a result, state-owned industries were divided into holding companies either owned by the military establishment and/or the business elite. During the first few years, it appears the regime was figuring out how to work around IMF standards to manipulate privatization efforts and redistribute state assets. Consequently, the economic impact of the first few years of the privatization efforts were minimal.

As the business elite continued to acquire state-owned assets, many of the companies quickly started to produce revenue and attracting foreign investments. Though, like the military owned holding companies during the Sadat years, the average Egyptian citizen never saw any of the economic benefits of the privatization reforms. A 2008 article for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace alludes to the nature of the reforms from their enactment in 1991 up to when the article was written. The authors suggest that the transfer of assets can only create a healthier economy if “well-established institutions prevent the creation of private monopolies. Hence, ‘share in ownership’ will give nothing to Egyptian citizens and will not achieve the

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<sup>143</sup> Farah, Nadia R. *Egypt’s Political Economy*, p. 80, 81

<sup>144</sup> Carana Corporation: “The Results and Impacts of Egypt’s Privatization Program”. USAID Coordination and Monitoring Services Project, 2002.  
<http://www1.aucegypt.edu/src/wsite1/Pdfs/Results%20and%20Impacts%20of%20Privatization%20in%20Egypt.pdf>

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

announced objective of a more even distribution of wealth.<sup>146</sup> They go on to claim that the regime never bothered to explain how the Egyptians would ever benefit from these reforms. The lack of clarity appears to be intentional, reaffirming the idea that privatization efforts were only a means to reassert the regime's influence over the state through the creation of a state-sponsored civilian elite. By meeting the minimal standards of the IMF, and with the lack of institutional oversight within the Egyptian government, the conditions were ideal for opportunistic businessmen to profit from these reforms if they aligned themselves with the NDP.

To oversee the implementation of these reforms and the transfer of state-owned assets to privately held holding companies, Mubarak enlisted the help of his son, Gamal. Over the course of the economic liberalization reforms, rifts between the new business elite and the military establishment manifested themselves almost immediately. While many of the military-owned enterprises remained exempt from the reforms, the companies run by the business elite were showing signs of improved growth and efficiency. Furthermore, these options were fresh opportunities, making them more attractive to foreign investors.<sup>147</sup> In an effort to increase his own influence within the government, Gamal started the Future Foundation, designed to attract prominent businessmen willing to ally themselves with him and take advantage of the new reforms. Well known businessmen like Mohammed Abul-Einein, Ahmed Ezz, and Ibrahim Kamel, immediately brought, capital, business savvy, and credibility to Gamal's camp.<sup>148</sup> As a result, Gamal's businessmen started working their way into prominent positions that allowed them to influence policy, exacerbating divisions in the NDP between the military establishment and the new civilian elite. At one point, the divisions were such that Gamal floated the idea of starting his own political party, the Future Party. However, the last thing Mubarak wanted was the destabilization of the structure due to the introduction of a new and influential political party. Instead, the divisions manifested themselves within the NDP.

The internal struggle for influence over the NDP did continue; however, and by 2000, some 42 percent of the NDP consisted of rising business professionals between the ages of 30-

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<sup>146</sup> Saif, Ibrahim and Choucair. "Egypt's Privatization Initiative Raises Questions". Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. December, 2008.

[http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/index.cfm?fa=show&article=22479&solr\\_hilite](http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/index.cfm?fa=show&article=22479&solr_hilite)

<sup>147</sup> Roll, Stephen. "Egypt's Business Elite after Mubarak: A Powerful Player Between Generals and Brotherhood". Stiftung Institute for International and Security Affairs. Berlin, 2013.

[http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research\\_papers/2013\\_RP08\\_rll.pdf](http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2013_RP08_rll.pdf)

<sup>148</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

40.<sup>149</sup> As mentioned before, Mubarak's continual amendments to the electoral system were attempts to balance the regime's desire to keep political authority with the need to appeal to the population to reinforce their legitimacy. Every time reforms were made, the NDP wanted to manipulate the application of the changes to work in their favor, like they did with redistricting in the 90s. One such change; however, was that the Supreme Constitutional Court moved to have judiciary oversight over the election, complicating matters for Mubarak. Rather than circumvent the court, Mubarak opted to flood the election with NDP candidates running as both members of the party, and as independents. In doing so, Mubarak changed the game. No longer were elections going to be manipulated to secure a specific NDP member for a particular position or seat. Instead, NDP members now had to run against one another to secure their position within the party, pitting the old guard directly against the new guard of the business elite.<sup>150</sup> Official NDP candidates won 172 seats, NDP independents won 181, while another 35 true independents joined party after the election. With more NDP members on the ballot in every race, the strategy succeeded, and opposition groups only won 38 seats in the 2000 election.<sup>151</sup> The result of the elections led to reforms within the NDP. A significant change was Gamal's suggestion of meritocratic candidate selection, essentially creating caucuses that allowed party members to internally vote for candidates in the upcoming Consultative Council Polls and local council elections.<sup>152</sup> By taking advantage of the evolving political system, Gamal's political faction was eventually able to secure a majority on the NDP's central board, continuing to expand their influence over policy and decision-making.

In the United States and many other modern democracies in Europe, a civilian government develops economic and security strategies, and oversees the implementation of policy as the state pursues its interests. The military is but a tool at the government's disposal to either protect or secure those interests. In Egypt, the structure of the polity is almost reverse, with former military presiding over government and military policy. The military seeks to define the security and economic interests of the state, while funneling discontent through political institutions and by promoting disingenuous social initiatives. The democratic façade that results

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<sup>149</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>150</sup> Roll, Stephen. "Egypt's Business Elite after Mubarak".

<sup>151</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

give opposition groups the perception of legitimate avenues to voice grievances and influence policy.<sup>153</sup> However, recent unrest in Egypt reveals the limits of the democratic façade to pacify internal discontent. Given Egypt's large and growing population, combined with limited resources, discontent is inevitable. Therefore, the last 63 years of military rule in Egypt was about balancing state interests with the demands of the populous, each regime employing a different strategy to reaffirm their legitimacy, and mitigate the rise of an opposition group that could challenge their influence over state policy.<sup>154</sup> For Nasser and the Free Officers, nationalism provided the military with the tools to nationalize industry and build a single party political structure to create a military monopoly of policy making and decision-making. Political and economic interests forced Sadat to move away from nationalism to preserve military dominance. He did so by privatizing industries within military-owned holdings, relieving the military of the burden of governance, and adopting the Islamist identity in an attempt to limit Islamist opposition to his policy. With Sadat's assassination, Mubarak first countered the Islamists with emergency powers, but as the Muslim Brotherhood became more moderate, Mubarak had to counter their influence with a more political solution.<sup>155</sup> Through electoral reforms that included redistricting and the addition of independents on the ballot, Mubarak wanted to curb the growing presence of Brotherhood and other opposition groups in parliament. With the help of his son, Mubarak initiated additional privatization efforts within the economy to create a civilian business elite allied to the NDP that could challenge the opposition.<sup>156</sup> While the financial elite grew threatened the political and economic influence of the old guard, the sacrifice was necessary to ensure NDP dominance in parliament.<sup>157</sup> The new civilian elite would dilute the ballot boxes and act as a counter to the Muslim Brotherhood's expanding political resource; thus, sustaining the political buffer that protected the military's monopoly on policymaking.

From Nasser to Mubarak, the purpose of political and electoral reforms were to adapt to shifting political dynamics between the military establishment and the population brought about by changing regional/international conditions. Continual adjustments to the political structure allowed opposition groups to use local grievances to slowly apply pressure and force further amendments to give them more access to the political process. With division within the ruling

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<sup>153</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, p. 77-80, 91

<sup>154</sup> Ibid, p. 91

<sup>155</sup> Ibid, p. 77-79

<sup>156</sup> Roll, Stephen. "Egypt's Business Elite after Mubarak"

<sup>157</sup> Saif, Ibrahim and Choucair. "Egypt's Privatization Initiative Raises Questions"

party, rising opposition influence among the population, and an aging President, the military faced considerable challenges to their position within the state. However, the combination of regional events and unexpected political turmoil created the ideal conditions for the military to discredit and remove the only significant challengers to their regime.

## Chapter 4

### Power Relations and the Military's Arab Spring

The current position of the military in Egyptian society is the result of these continual efforts to reshuffle the state's infrastructure while sustaining the military's position of influence and strength. The expansion of the bureaucracy relieves the military of the burdens of governance. While the regime's influence over the various industries, enterprises, and political institutions, makes them well-positioned in all essential sectors of society. Without adequate civilian oversight, they can pull many political and economic levers to manipulate legislation to make government work in their favor. While recent unrest suggests that there are limitations to this strategy, it reveals the fortified position of the military within the state's institutional infrastructure. It also demonstrates the capability of the military to preserve the regime despite an ailing economy and sudden periods of extreme instability. The following chapter will discuss the political atmosphere leading up to the Arab Spring unrest, and how the turmoil advanced the interests of the military regime.

In the early 2000s, significant international events presented numerous challenges to the Mubarak regime. Al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, brought about an increase of U.S. presence in the region.<sup>158</sup> While much of the International community supported the U.S. military response in Afghanistan, Washington's decision to invade Iraq put U.S. allies in precarious situation. While Mubarak condemned U.S. military action in Iraq, the regime's eventual support suggests that it was under pressure from the Bush administration to participate. Mubarak originally tried to act as an arbiter in negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait, but when Iraq invaded it damaged Egypt's credibility as an effective Arab mediator. The economic situation in Egypt was getting worse, and with the failed negotiations, Egypt needed to demonstrate Egypt's indispensability in the region to secure additional sources of external aid.<sup>159</sup> By participating in the Gulf war, Egypt satisfied its U.S. benefactor and improved its relations with the Gulf States.<sup>160</sup>

At home, the controversial war emboldened Mubarak's opposition, giving them political ammunition to attempt to discredit the regime and expand their own influence. Secular opposition

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<sup>158</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>159</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 109, 110

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p. 110-111



to the Mubarak regime mobilized under the Kefaya movement, while The Muslim Brotherhood also increased the frequency and intensity of its rhetoric. The 2005 elections reflect popular support for their message, as the Muslim Brotherhood secured 88 seats government, 20 of which were in parliament. In the 2005 parliamentary elections, The Brotherhood decided to try and increase their political presence by allying themselves with other political parties and fielding Independent candidates. Possibly concerned about consecutive Brotherhood gains, Mubarak postponed the 2006 local elections for two years as the regime made further amendments to the electoral process.<sup>161</sup>

In the wake of the 2005 election, the NDP and the regime became less concerned with democratic reform, human rights, and political accommodations to the opposition. As a result, the crackdowns on the Muslim Brotherhood increased between 2006 and 2008. This was not consistent with U.S. rhetoric regarding democratic transformation in the region, and the U.S. congress began threatening to decrease the amount of U.S. aid to Egypt if the regime did not take more action to implement democratic reform.<sup>162</sup> In 2007, representatives from the Bush administration decided to meet with the members of the Brotherhood, bolstering their political credibility in Egypt.<sup>163</sup> While the regime did institute new political reforms, they did not appear to acknowledge U.S. concerns. For the 2008 municipal elections, all independent candidates needed the approval of 140 members of local councils, as well as backing from current members of parliament in order to be eligible to run.<sup>164</sup> As a result, the only political bloc capable of benefiting from independent candidates was the NDP. Prior to 2008 elections, Egyptian security forces also arrested hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members and barred others from registering as candidates, forcing the group to boycott the elections. Following these events, the government quickly put down any efforts to organize protests, and crackdowns on Brotherhood members became even more frequent.<sup>165</sup>

Due to increasingly bad economic conditions including inflation, bread shortages, and a rise in food and energy prices, there was a substantial amount of public sympathy for the Brotherhood. Of course, the Brotherhood took the opportunity to take advantage of these

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<sup>161</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>162</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 108-110

<sup>163</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>164</sup> STRATFOR: "Egypt: Elections and Future of the Muslim Brotherhood". *Analysis*. April, 2008.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

conditions, having their members hand out bread within impoverished communities.<sup>166</sup> With increasingly bad economic conditions and political fractures developing within the NDP, the Muslim Brotherhood appeared poised to take advantage of the materializing political opportunities.

Between 2005 and 2010, the election delays and increased Brotherhood crackdowns were a departure from previous strategies to manipulate election results through referendums. The deliberate disregard for the democratic façade suggests that the internal rifts between the business elite and the old guard of the military were significant enough that the regime felt it needed to avoid political entanglements and focus on post-Mubarak uncertainties. Unlike his predecessors, Mubarak did not appoint a vice president. With Gamal's growing influence in government, suspicions arose about the possibility of the Presidency being passed from Father to son. When Gamal accompanied his father to Washington DC in 2009 to attend Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, Mubarak appeared to be putting his son's abilities as a statesman on display.<sup>167</sup> However, in 2010, the sudden unrest in Tunisia and growing support for the Brotherhood within Egypt, bolstered the old guard's case for a military successor

Although Nasser and Sadat both had sons, the Office of the Presidency still went to former military officers. The prospect of Gamal inheriting the Presidency caused many within the military to voice their concern over his lack of military service and the potential change in procedure.<sup>168</sup> Mubarak attempted to compromise, offering the transfer of power to his intelligence chief, Omar Suleiman, until Gamal was fit to govern. However, Suleiman's health was in question, and the military establishment was unenthusiastic about such terms. Facing opposition from both former military within the NDP and ranking military officers, Mubarak decided that he would post-pone the debate by running for President again in 2011.<sup>169</sup>

Leading up to the parliamentary elections in late 2010, crackdowns on the Brotherhood continued. The regime also denied requests by neutral foreign observers to moderate the

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<sup>166</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

<sup>167</sup> Hanna, Michael R. "The Son Also Rises: Egypt's Looming Succession Struggle", *World Policy Journal* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Fall, 2009)  
<http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/40468661?uid=3739936&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21102692089651>

<sup>168</sup> See STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report". \_ commander-in-chief of the Egyptian Armed forces Field Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi and Lt. Gen. Sami Anan met with Mubarak privately to discuss their concerns about a Gamal Presidency

<sup>169</sup> STRATFOR: "The Evolving Modern Egyptian Republic: A Special Report"

elections. Despite these events, many political parties decided to field candidates in the November election, including the Muslim Brotherhood. However, the NDP did not intend to repeat the 2005 embarrassment. After early indications revealed a large NDP majority, opposition groups united in their protest and boycotted the second round of voting in December. The boycott by these groups exacerbated existing animosities between organized opposition and the government, and reinforced a growing public image of a corrupt Mubarak regime.<sup>170</sup>

Initially, the protests were sporadic and confined to communities where specific opposition parties and/or candidates were popular. As a result, it appeared that the NDP would have the opportunity to continue the succession debate during another Mubarak term. However, in January of 2011, the Egyptian population suddenly began to mobilize in protest against the regime. Whether due to regional events, the November election results, unresolved grievances, or a combination of each, large crowds gathered outside government buildings and reports of looting spread throughout Cairo. In late January, Mubarak made several attempts to appease the public. One such measure was the announcement of Omar Suleiman as his Vice President in an apparent attempt to dispel the fears of a possible Gamal succession plan. Mubarak also appealed to the public by claiming that the country would descend into chaos if he suddenly left office, and that he would step down the following September after overseeing a transition of power to Omar Suleiman.<sup>171</sup> When this did not suffice, and local security forces were unable to disperse the crowds, Mubarak mobilized the military to restore order. However, both the military and the protestors exercised restraint. The opposition then requested formal negotiations with the military to discuss a transitional government and the removal of Mubarak.<sup>172</sup>

This turn of events regarding the dynamic between the protestors and the military presented a unique opportunity for the military establishment. Instead of having to continue to oppose Mubarak and his succession plan, they simply had to stand by and allow the population to force him to step down. Once Mubarak and his son were removed from equation, so was much of the political capital held by the business class. Now, the challenge for the military would be how to manage the Egyptian moderates and the conservative Islamists.

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Hanna, Michael R. "The Son Also Rises: Egypt's Looming Succession Struggle", *World Policy Journal* Vol. 26, No. 3 (Fall, 2009) <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/40468661?uid=3739936&uid=2&uid=4&uid=3739256&sid=21102692089651>

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

Aware of what had led to Mubarak's downfall, the military wanted to be careful not to dictate to a population emboldened by the successful removal of Mubarak. To satisfy both the Islamists and the progressives, the military held elections and de-criminalized political parties previously outlawed.<sup>173</sup> The brevity of the Arab Spring movement did not give previously outlawed and/or fledgling opposition groups enough time to create a political platform, organize, and communicate practical ideas to the Egyptian populous. As a result, the Muslim Brotherhood was in a unique position to capitalize on their influence within society.

With the arrest of Gamal Mubarak, he and his business elites were no longer viable political challengers. While a few were arrested, the military establishment encouraged the rest to realign themselves with their interests. As a result, the military institutional and economic fiefdoms remained relatively intact. In June 2012, the military had nothing to lose by putting up Ahmed Shafiq as a candidate for President in the post-revolution elections.<sup>174</sup> Perhaps fearing a return to the status quo, many moderates threw their support behind the Islamists.

After the Muslim Brotherhood candidate, Mohamed Morsi, narrowly beat out Shafiq, the military and the Islamist party cooperated to begin drafting a new constitution. Having thrown their support behind the Islamists, non-Islamist parties were disappointed when the Brotherhood decided to exclude them from the process. As a result, the 2012 constitution contained many of the same authoritarian provisions regarding civil-military relations, the structure of government, socioeconomic rights, and civil liberties, and religion-state relations.<sup>175</sup> In addition, the document continued to grant the military institutional fiefdoms exemptions from oversight by elected officials or other institutions.<sup>176</sup> Furthermore, the new draft left many of the old constitutional legal and political framework in place, including those governing the existing political and economic structure, trade unions, professional syndicates, and human rights organizations. The Muslim Brotherhood even implemented new checks on what it deemed divisive, derogatory, or conspiratorial propaganda and/or media. They also disregarded suggestions by activists and human rights organizations to restructure institutions like the police and Judiciary. In drafting the

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<sup>173</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

2012 constitution, the Brotherhood ignored or sidelined many, if not all, of the original aims of the revolution regarding constitutional reform.<sup>177</sup>

Morsi and the Brotherhood were unable to dislodge the military fiefdoms and government structure, and even their Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) reforms were done in cooperation with the military.<sup>178</sup> They accommodated the existing business elite, allowing the current fiscal policies associated with taxation, public expenditure, and wages to go unchanged.<sup>179</sup> The Brotherhood even claimed that the Mubarak era policies would be successful in implemented by uncorrupted leaders like themselves.<sup>180</sup> Thus, instead of replacing the civil-military state infrastructure, the Brotherhood went to great lengths to position itself inside it. Attempting to fortify their political influence and survival, the Brotherhood strategically placed their members within the state, executive, municipal, and judicial bureaucracies.<sup>181</sup> Morsi also quickly appointed an attorney general and interior minister who quickly undertook initiatives to detain and prosecute remaining political activists. Morsi also issued a number of decrees, one of which stated that the constituent assembly responsible for writing the new constitution could not legally be dissolved. When the Judicial branch challenged the decrees, the Brotherhood drafted legislation to lower the required retirement age of lower judges, subsequently forcing approximately a third of them out of office.<sup>182</sup> As the Brotherhood continued this campaign to reform the internal workings of government and extend its network of members through the bureaucracies, public unrest escalated once again. Not only did Brotherhood members attempt to aggressively quell these demonstrations, they disseminated inflammatory propaganda aimed religious minorities groups like the Shiites and Coptic Christians, inciting religious violence.<sup>183</sup>

The military originally planned to simply co-opt the Brotherhood, letting them govern while the military establishment preserved its economic interests and decision-making authority. However, the Brotherhood's choice to exclude and alienate non-Islamist political movements led to immediate opposition among the population. This approach disrupted the delicate balance that stabilized the state's infrastructure. Ashraf El-Sharif points out in *ØEgypt's Post-Mubarak*

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<sup>177</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

Predicamentö that the ideological foundations of the Brotherhood made them unwilling to include non-Islamist political movements, and the divergent notions of national interests and security made a partnership with the military unrealizable. Furthermore, the incompatibility of the Brotherhoodø political ambitions with the basic goals of the revolution led to a return large scale demonstrations.<sup>184</sup>

With Islamic interpretations of law and political organization intertwined in Brotherhood ideology, their early political maneuvers suggest that they wanted to reform the state in their image. Instead of trying to dismantle the regimeø infrastructure by encouraging political pluralism, it appears the Brotherhood sought to establish their own pillars of political power within the existing system.<sup>185</sup> In doing so, the Brotherhood became a considerable liability that endangered the economic and security interests of the state, and the Egyptian military once again decided to assert its authority to stabilize the situation.

Since the military, police, and judiciary institutions remained intact, the military establishment had the capability to simply block the Brotherhoodø political actions and force them out of office. To do so, the military brought together former allies among the media, business class, and political elites. They also made collaborative appeals to the non-Islamist political movements and religious minorities that the Brotherhood conveniently alienated. Using a more inclusive tone, they were able to orchestrate the removal of the Brotherhood without undermining the publicø perception of the military as a neutral institution. The military tried to reinforce this public opinion by ushering in former International Atomic Energy Association representative and prominent pro-revolution political figure, Mohamed ElBaradei, as Vice President in July of 2013.<sup>186</sup>

The removal and detainment of Morsi did not come without consequences. By renewing the historical discord between the Muslim Brotherhood and the military establishment, the military alienated the countryø Islamists. As clashes broke out between the military and Brotherhood supporters, ElBaradei continued to make appeals to the organization to return to political negotiations. However, the military had no intention to negotiate, initiating an aggressive campaign against the Brotherhood with the objective of permanently incapacitating what was the most organized and influential opposition group. By undermining appeals by

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<sup>184</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

ElBaradei to end the crackdowns, the Vice President resigned to disassociate himself from the military's actions.<sup>187</sup>

In the subsequent weeks, military crackdowns on Islamist demonstrations and raids on Brotherhood members continued, drawing international and regional attention. By September, early estimates indicated that at least 1,000 people, including 100 police officers, died in clashes between security forces and Brotherhood supporters.<sup>188</sup> The United States threatened to reconsider its aid obligations to Egypt if the military and General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi did not exercise restraint.

Following the military's removal of Morsi, Saudi Arabia encouraged Egypt's use of force against the Brotherhood. Together with the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait, these Gulf States pledged a combined 12 billion dollars in aid by the end of that month.<sup>189</sup> The United States cut in half its annual delivery of 1.3 billion dollars that September, but Saudi Arabia pledged to cover whatever the U.S. failed to deliver.<sup>190</sup> In recent years, the U.S. has directed only 250 million the aid funds towards the Egyptian economy, while the rest is allocated to the military. Before the Gulf pledged the additional aid, Egypt was on pace to lose 1-2 billion dollars a month.<sup>191</sup> Despite U.S. cutbacks in aid delivery, the influx of alternative sources suggests that external state actors not only have an interest in the stability of Egypt, they are willing to spend a lot of capital to that end.

Since the Free Officers Movement in 1952, the military establishment's political and economic influence evolved in response to both domestic and international pressures. With a large population and limited resources, the military regime needed to control the Egyptian economy to secure its position of authority. Nasser accomplished this by eliminating the Ottoman/colonial era elite through the nationalization of profitable economic sectors. In an attempt to relieve internal discontent, he provided social benefits to the population which he paid

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<sup>187</sup> Daily News Egypt: "ElBaradei Calls for Talks with Brotherhood". Aug. 2013

<http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/08/03/elbaradei-calls-for-talks-with-brotherhood/>

<sup>188</sup> Aljazeera: "Egypt Security Forces Storm Pro-Morsi Town". *Middle East*. Sep. 2013.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/09/201391943416404313.html>

<sup>189</sup> Werr, Patrick. "Analysis: With Gulf Aid, Egypt Economy can Limp Through Crisis". Reuters. Aug. 2013.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/08/20/us-egypt-protests-economy-analysis-idUSBRE97J08M20130820>

<sup>190</sup> Gearan, Anne. "Untangling the Fate of U.S. Aid to Egypt". *The Washington Post*. Aug. 2013.

[http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-20/world/41427655\\_1\\_military-aid-obama-administration-egypt](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-08-20/world/41427655_1_military-aid-obama-administration-egypt)

<sup>191</sup> Werr, Patrick. "Analysis: With Gulf Aid, Egypt Economy can Limp Through Crisis".

for using the substantial amounts of aid Egypt received from the superpowers. For Sadat and Mubarak, an evolution of this strategy was required. Liberalization of the political and economic sectors became necessary to relieve the military of specific governing responsibilities, and to meet conditions by the U.S. to ensure a consistent flow of aid. Through various means of legal manipulation, the military establishment put themselves in a position of oversight in both the political and economic sectors of society. In this way, the military created a buffer between them and the bureaucracy while maintaining permanent ties to important institutions. The structure enables the military to present itself as politically neutral. As a result, the military establishment is now remarkably resistant to political fluctuation. However, the growing population and fragile economy makes their position increasingly reliant on their ability to secure external sources of aid to stabilize the economy and maintain security capabilities.



## Chapter 5

### Regional Interests and the Role of Egypt in Stability

In Steven Cook's *Ruling but not Governing*, Cook argues that the Egyptian military maintains a "flexible authoritarian order" by deflecting internal opposition through layers of pseudo-democratic institutions that insulate the military establishment from political criticism. In his conclusion, Cook states:

It is unfashionable in the Middle East to acknowledge publicly the importance of external actors for fear that this may be construed as an effort to impose democracy from abroad. However, interested outside parties can use a combination of incentives and political benchmarks to encourage a democratic transition. Without an external catalyst for change it is likely that familiar patterns of authoritarian politics will endure in military-dominated states like Egypt and Algeria.<sup>192</sup>

Instead, external states pledged a significant amount of aid to Egyptian military following the overthrow of the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood. Rather than take the opportunity to promote a grassroots movement for political pluralism, many external state actors opted for Egyptian military governance.

#### *Saudi Arabia*

The current standing of Saudi-Egypt relations is a consequence of recent events that effect the security and stability of the Saudi regime. Due to Saudi Arabia's economic strength, the state's primary interests are security related. When examining the strengths and vulnerabilities of the Saudi regime, there are several unique characteristics of the state that influence how it pursues interests. Saudi Arabia is very large in proportion to its population, one-quarter of which consists of non-citizen migrant workers. The Saudi military is relatively weak compared to its regional neighbors, such as Iran or Turkey. Saudi Arabia is one of the region's largest economies because it is the world's largest exporter of oil, and sits on a quarter of the world's known reserves.<sup>193</sup> The Saudi regime also derives its legitimacy from the Sunni Islamic Identity, and two of the Islam's most holy cities, Mecca and Medina, lie within its sovereign territory. Due to these factors, Saudi Arabia pursues its security interests by preventing the rise

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<sup>192</sup> Cook, Steven A. *Ruling But Not Governing*, p. 148

<sup>193</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 193

of regional hegemons, forging important international relationships, and pacifying internal discontent. The intent of this strategy is to protect the state from invasion and safeguard the regime from internal instability. Currently, Islamic opposition and militant groups, Syria, and Iran are Saudi Arabia's primary threats. While stability around the Suez Canal is important for Saudi oil to reach U.S. and European markets, Saudi Arabia's primary interests in Egypt's stability relates to the Islamic opposition, Sunni militant groups, and Shi'ite militant groups associated with Iran.

In recent years, Saudi Arabia approached foreign policy on three different levels simultaneously. First, the international level, with Saudi Arabia's strategic relationship with the United States. Second, at the regional level, Saudi Arabia uses its economic and political capital to play an important balancing role among more militarily powerful neighbors. Third, the Arabian Peninsula level, asserting an almost hegemonic role over Gulf Monarchies within its sphere of influence.<sup>194</sup> Given that Saudi Arabia's legitimacy derives from its Islamic identity, the regime faces domestic and regional challenges to this religious legitimacy due to its enormous wealth and relationship with the United States. In order to advance its security interests, Saudi Arabia must address the dual demands of both the state and Arab/Islamic identities. Only recently did events make a former rival like Egypt an important element of this strategy.

For the Saudi regime, Egypt has not always been a natural ally. As mentioned previously, in the 1950s and 60s, Gamal Nasser's regional ambitions and Pan-Arab nationalist rhetoric were a direct threat to the Saudi regime. To counter the allure of Pan-Arab nationalism, the Saudis established a network of mosques, businesses, and charitable organizations to further the Salafist Islamic identity. Through this network, the Saudi regime could influence the internal dynamics of other states by funding Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood throughout the region. From 1962 to 1970, Yemen became the ideological battleground between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Limited support from Britain and the United States allowed Saudi Arabia to hold off the Pan-Arab Egyptian threat. While the conflict in Yemen did contribute to a weakening of the Pan-Arab nationalism, the Israeli victory over Egypt and its allies in the 1967 war destroyed Nasser's ambitions to use the identity to unify Arab states and bring them under Egyptian influence. Although the U.S. supported Saudi Arabia against Egypt, economic interests and the

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<sup>194</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 198, 199

demands of the Arab/Islamic identities led the Saudi regime to defy the U.S. only three years later for their support of Israel in the October War of 1973.<sup>195</sup>

Saudi Arabia capability to act with autonomy in pursuit of interests comes from its leverage over the price of oil. American oil companies discovered oil in Saudi Arabia in 1938; however, the regime did not gain its leverage over the oil market until it nationalized Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO) in 1973, allowing it to accrue all of the state's oil revenue. The Saudi embargo on the U.S. also took advantage of its increasing dependence on foreign sources of oil (22% in 1970 to 36 % in 1973).<sup>196</sup> With state control over Saudi petroleum resources, the regime no longer had to negotiate with private domestic oil interests. As a result, international actors, like the U.S, could not bypass the regime by dealing with a private oil entity within the country. Furthermore, the Saudi regime's influence in OPEC was a significant foreign policy tool, as it allowed the Saudis to manipulate the global price of oil. This leverage led Saudi Arabia to and arrange with the Nixon Administration to essentially buy promises of security and military aid from the United States.<sup>197</sup> The arrangement involved binding U.S. currency to Saudi Arabian oil. Saudi Arabia would agree to sell oil on the global market only in exchange for U.S. dollars, and tolerate U.S. support for Israel. By 1976, all the OPEC nations also agreed to sell oil using U.S. dollars. In return, the United States agreed to defend the regime against all foreign invaders, and supply the necessary military aid for the regime to defend itself from internal threats.

Securing the United States as an ally provided many economic and military benefits to the Saudi regime. With the United States's strong navy and high demand for the resource, they are not only a consistent buyer, they also have the capability to protect the sea lanes of communication that allow Saudi Arabia to export oil to the international market. As a result, Saudi Arabia does not need to spend money on a defense budget to maintain a large navy, nor does it depend upon its neighboring states to export their resource over land. Relieved of those burdens, Saudi Arabia is able to maximize revenue and exercise political autonomy within the region. The security guarantees from the United States also protect the regime from foreign invasion, limiting the regime's need for a large standing army that could potentially threaten the monarchy. With the alliance, the regime can rely on a smaller, more specialized force, loyal to

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<sup>195</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 205-208

<sup>196</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 186

<sup>197</sup> STRATFOR: "Egypt Seeks to Balance Iran and the Gulf States". *Analysis*. July, 2012.

the regime. With U.S. training and advanced military hardware, Saudi Arabia now has the capability to use this limited but effective tool to protect its interests and project influence over its gulf neighbors, as well as defend the regime against any threats that emerge from within.

Before the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi family did not require security assurances from the United States, nor did it have excess revenue necessary to pacify local discontent. Their only way to exercise control was through religious authority, given to the House of Saud through a close relationship with ibn Abd al-Wahhab, the architect of the Salafi brand of Islam in the 1700s. Salafism is a traditional brand of Sunni Islam that, Salafist argue, adheres to principles and practices of the earliest Muslims.<sup>198</sup> With strict religious codes, adherence to the Salafi Islam requires personal sacrifice and submission. For this reason, many Salafist believe representative government is too flexible, corruptible, and secular, contrary to the consistency and purity of Sharia.<sup>199</sup> Consequently, the Saudi Regime proliferates this interpretation to further legitimize and protect their control over government.

While Saudi Arabia uses organizations to spread the Salafism in order to expand its religious influence, a primary concern of the regime originates from militant Sunni organizations like al-Qaeda, and Iranian backed Shiite groups like the Houthi rebels in Yemen. Both call for the regime's destruction, and continually exhibit a willingness to use violence against Saudi Arabia and its allies.<sup>200</sup> However, less violent groups like the Muslim Brotherhood can also be a threat when they challenge the legitimacy of the Saudi regime and question its religious authority.

While the Muslim Brotherhood did have close ties with the regime until recently, their rise to power in Egypt revealed how such an organization with influence over the population could use the democratic process as an avenue towards political significance. By promoting itself as a moderate opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood gained legitimacy, and was able to use its religious influence to pursue political recourse. Perhaps emboldened by the events in Tunisia and Egypt, the Saudi branch of the Brotherhood openly called for democratic reforms in Saudi Arabia, even promoting a day of rage protest in Riyadh on March 11, 2011. The potential of democratic reform in Saudi Arabia undermines the self-promoted religious authority and

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<sup>198</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 200

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 200, 2001

<sup>200</sup> STRATFOR: "Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood: Unexpected Adversaries". *Analysis*, March, 2012.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/saudi-arabia-and-muslim-brotherhood-unexpected-adversaries>

political legitimacy of the monarchy. By posturing as a political opposition group and potential religious alternative to authoritarian regimes, the Brotherhood positioned itself as a direct threat to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf monarchies. Furthermore, Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt challenged Saudi supremacy in the Gulf. For such reasons, Saudi Arabia vehemently opposed the democratic experiment in Egypt, and supported the military's removal of President Morsi and the additional crackdowns on the Brotherhood.<sup>201</sup>

While the Brotherhood emerged as a viable threat to the Saudi regime, the Kingdom has another reason to improve its relations with the Egyptian military. Currently, the largest state threat to the Saudi regime is the Shiite government in Iran. As Saudi Arabia derives legitimacy from its strict Sunni identity, the Mullahs in Iran derive their right to rule from their Shiite heritage. As discussed earlier in the work, the foundation of these Islamic sects differ in regards to the inheritance of religious authority in Islam. After almost 1500 years, the dispute appears to be irreconcilable, as Saudi Arabia and Iran still actively oppose one another along these sectarian lines.<sup>202</sup> Although Sunni Muslims are about an 85 percent majority worldwide, 2 of the 3 largest oil producing countries in the region, Iran and Iraq, contain a majority Shiite population. Saudi Arabia is the third, and as shown in Figure 1, their Shiite minority inconveniently resides in the oil-producing Eastern Province of the state.<sup>203</sup>

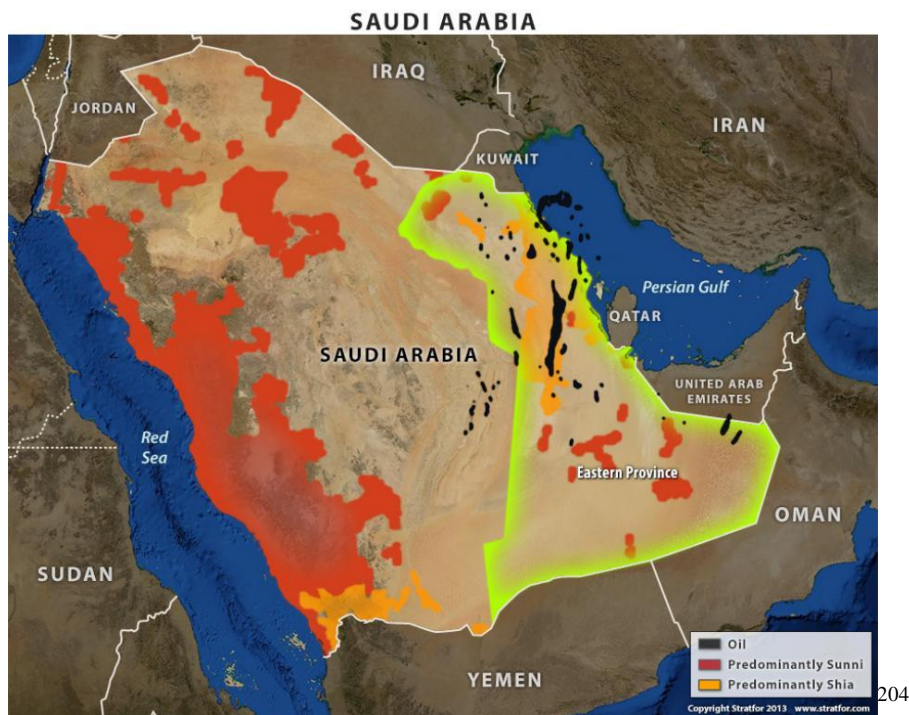
(Figure 1.)

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<sup>201</sup> Lacroix, Stephane. "Saudi Arabia's Muslim Brotherhood Predicament". *The Washington Post*. March, 2014.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/03/20/saudi-arabias-muslim-brotherhood-predicament/>

<sup>202</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 143

<sup>203</sup> STRATFOR: "Saudi Arabia's Critical Oil Regions", May. 2013.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/image/saudi-arabias-critical-oil-regions>



Saudi Arabia attempts to secure its borders via friendly relationships with neighboring monarchies in Jordan, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates. Through the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Saudi regime influences policy within the Arabian Peninsula. However, allies like Kuwait, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates do have relevant Shiite populations susceptible to Iranian manipulation. With a Shiite led government now in Iraq, Iranian influence in the region is expanding, and militant groups opposed to the Saudi regime are openly operating in areas like Yemen, Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, all of which are in close proximity to Saudi Arabia.<sup>205</sup> With Iranian influence growing to the north and east, Saudi Arabia does not want another religious regime in Egypt challenging its legitimacy from the west.

Although the U.S. relationship appears to address Saudi interests, the regime needs to be reassured that U.S. security guarantees are credible, as the arrangement also presents a number of additional security risks. The United States openly supports Israel, and while Israel and Saudi Arabia share some specific enemies, Saudi Arabia must present itself as an opponent of the Jewish state in order to maintain its legitimacy. Furthermore, the Obama administration's recent

<sup>204</sup> STRATFOR: "Saudi Arabia's Critical Oil Regions", May. 2013.

<https://www.stratfor.com/image/saudi-arabias-critical-oil-regions>

<sup>205</sup> STRATFOR: "Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood: Unexpected Adversaries". *Analysis*, March, 2012.

<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/saudi-arabia-and-muslim-brotherhood-unexpected-adversaries>

responses to Egypt, Syria, and Iran have been contrary to Saudi interests. In Egypt, the U.S. did nothing to protect its former allies in the Egyptian regime, and allowed an opposition group hostile to the Saudi regime to rise to political power. The U.S. also initiated negotiations with Saudi Arabia's primary regional threat, Iran. Furthermore, U.S. unwillingness to make good on its promise to intervene in a destabilized Syria. As a result, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran, sought to protect and advance their own interests by trying to influence the outcome of the Syrian civil war via proxy militant groups.<sup>206</sup>

With both internal and external threats, the Saudi regime must weigh and evaluate each threat independently, acting in accordance to its interests under those specific circumstances. In Egypt, they opposed the rise of the Brotherhood because of the group's challenges to Saudi legitimacy. While Saudi support for affiliated Islamist groups in Syria might seem contradictory, the Assad regime is historically hostile to Saudi Arabia, and remains a close ally of the Shiite government in Iran. If the U.S. fails to acknowledge Saudi security interests, they are forced to wield their economic power in an attempt to influence regional events.

With its considerable influence over the world's most valuable commodity, Saudi Arabia could potentially court another security benefactor if the international balance of power experiences a shift. The most likely alternative to the U.S. is Russia. However, Russia's history of support for Iran and Syria make it a questionable substitute, and the sectarian battle over identity between these regional actors does not appear to be going anywhere. Unfortunately for the Saudi regime, the sometimes fickle nature of U.S. of foreign policy has put it in a precarious security situation. The Arab Spring and its effects on Egypt shed light on the potential lack of U.S. commitment to security obligations, and the expansion of Iranian influence might emboldened Shiite oppositions groups within the Saudi sphere of influence.<sup>207</sup> The Saudis would also like to avoid the return of a democratic experiment in Egypt, as shared identity unites religious opposition groups in both countries. The prospect of such groups achieving democratic victories in Egypt might embolden their affiliates in Saudi Arabia. At the moment, Egypt's secular military regime is not threat to Saudi Arabia's religious authority. As a result, the Saudi regime will likely continue to encourage the Egyptian military's influence government. If

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<sup>206</sup> STRATFOR: "The World According to Riyadh". *Geopolitical Diary*. October, 2008.

<http://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/geopolitical-diary-world-according-riyadh>

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

instability returns to Egypt, Saudi Arabia's recent behavior suggests that they provide additional aid to help the Egyptian military stabilize the situation, regardless of potential U.S. condemnation. Saudi Arabia's support for Egypt is evidence that the regime will act autonomously if it perceives the U.S. as unwilling to acknowledge Saudi security interests. This is because Saudi Arabia understands that while U.S. legitimacy demands that it support democracy, their mutual interests require stability.<sup>208</sup>

## Israel

Like the other Middle Eastern regimes, Israel faces internal and external threats that stem from identity. Despite its small size, Israel has one of the largest economies in the region behind Turkey and Saudi Arabia. However, its small sovereign territory and the concentration of its population make security a primary interest of the state. The concern with security is exacerbated by the presence of conflicting identities and unresolved territorial disputes.<sup>209</sup> For Israel, Egypt is an important strategic partner because cooperation lends it legitimacy and additional security along its southern border. With a reduced threat of invasion from the south, Israel can focus more on asymmetric threats from southern Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, as well as hostile states to the east. Furthermore, the U.S. encourages this relationship with a considerable amount of aid that advances each state's economic and security interests.<sup>210</sup> While the Egyptian military regime understands the benefits of the peace, Israel is aware of its lack of popularity within Arab populations. As a result, Israel is unenthusiastic about the prospect of democracy in Egypt, as fluctuations in government could threaten the current cooperative nature of the relationship and potentially renew hostilities between the two states.<sup>211</sup>

Israel's national security and foreign policies derive from a historical context associated with both identity and statehood. The regional threats to the Jewish State materialized immediately following the establishment of Israel in 1948. From the outset of Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union understood the strategic value of influencing the Levant, and

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<sup>208</sup> STRATFOR: "Egypt and Russia Strengthen Ties Raise to U.S. Concerns". Analysis, Feb. 2014.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/egypt-and-russia-strengthen-ties-raise-us-concerns>

<sup>209</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-125

<sup>210</sup> Ibid, p. 115

<sup>211</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Egypt: From Eternal Stability to Turmoil". *Geopolitical Diary*, April 2012.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-egypt-eternal-stability-turmoil>



believed that the establishment of a Jewish state might work to their advantage. Initially, The Soviet Union thought their influence in the Levant would result from a level of ideological affinity, as many of the Jews migrating to the region were from Eastern Europe and Russia. On the contrary, the United States felt their influence over Israel would come from their instrumental role in the formation of the Jewish state. However, with the emerging superpowers still occupied with the post-war Europe, the development of their diplomatic and military strategies towards the region were gradual.

For Israel, the regional conditions were instantly hostile. Surrounding populations interpreted the creation of the Jewish state as an affront to their religious and ethnic identities, believing they had historical claims to the territory. Arab regimes embraced the irredentism because it united them against Israel, and allowed them to shift public discontent to an external enemy. To counter the threat, Israel played off of the superpower ambitions of the Soviet Union by securing an arms deal to supply Israeli forces in the war against Egypt, Jordan, and Syria.<sup>212</sup> Access to warm water ports is a traditional foreign policy goal of Russia, as it advances their economic and security interests. By supplying the Israelis, the Soviet Union hoped to gain an immediate foothold in the Mediterranean.<sup>213</sup> However, Israel did not want to sacrifice autonomy by becoming reliant on the Soviet Union, so after their victory against the Arab coalition, Israel sought help from the French to expand their list of benefactors. Already embroiled in conflict in Algeria, the French were attempting to retain their colonial sphere of influence in the region. With their historical presence in the Levant, military support for Israel became an element of that strategy. The rise of nationalism and the exercising of autonomy among Arab states threatened the survival of the Jewish state, and countered European ambitions in the region. This is evident in the collaboration between Israel, France, and Britain to topple the Nasser regime in Egypt and secure the Suez Canal during the Suez Crisis of 1956.<sup>214</sup>

Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal to gain sovereignty over the sea lane and extract the economic benefits. Britain saw this move as a direct threat to their economic security and an affront to their traditional influence in the region, and as a result, they wanted to end Nasser's rule in Egypt. France, already engaged with nationalist enemies in Algeria, agreed to aid the

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<sup>212</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Egypt: From Eternal Stability to Turmoil". *Geopolitical Diary*, April 2012.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-egypt-eternal-stability-turmoil>

<sup>213</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Israel: Biblical and Modern". *Geopolitical Diary*, May 2011.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-israel-biblical-and-modern>

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

Israelis who wanted to diminish the military capabilities of an emboldened Nasser, and create a buffer in the Sinai between Egyptian forces and Israel's southern border. The invasion and collaboration of the three states was not in U.S. interests; however, who were attempting to assert their influence in the region and court Nasser's nationalist movement into an alliance against the communist ideology of the Soviet Union.

With the French withdrawal from Algeria, and a realignment of French policy in the Middle East, Israel needed a new ally. The U.S. understood the Soviet Union's desire for access to the Mediterranean; therefore, keeping Israel from seeking Soviet patronage was essential. This reality coincided with the death of Nasser in 1970 and an attempt by Egypt in 1973 to drive Israel out of the Sinai that ended in a stalemate.<sup>215</sup> For Anwar Sadat, the political situation was fragile. The allure of Pan-Arab nationalism was fading following costly wars with Israel, the failure of the United Arab Republic, and Nasser's death. Arab regimes needed to make a substantial shift in policy to address immediate security interests, presenting a unique opportunity for Israel to influence the terms of peace with its neighbors.

The economic and political cost of war with Israel made it difficult for the Arab regimes to remain united in their opposition to the Jewish state. Syria was in a precarious situation because the legitimacy of the Assad regime relied upon Arab nationalism and the liberation of the Palestinian people. They insisted on a comprehensive peace agreement that would include Egypt because the Assad regime could not abandon the nationalist identity needed to unite a predominately Sunni country behind the ruling Alawi minority.<sup>216</sup> By institutionalizing nationalism and incorporating it into the Ba'ath party ideology, losing Egypt as an Arab ally would severely weaken the legitimacy of the regime. However, Israel had no real interests in peace with the hostile state. The Golan Heights were the only strategically valuable bargaining chip in the negotiations, and Israel already took possession of the geographical feature.<sup>217</sup> However, for the sake of Israel's security interests, Egypt was a much more attractive partner for peace.

Since the pillar of the Egyptian regime is a secular military regime and a bourgeoisie that profits from peace and economic stability, they do not have to rely on nationalism for legitimacy.

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<sup>215</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Israel: Biblical and Modern". *Geopolitical Diary*, May 2011.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-israel-biblical-and-modern>

<sup>216</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-130. 340-341

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

Disagreements over previous weapons deals with that Soviets also left the Egyptian military disappointed with that relationship; thus, Egypt needed a more reliable economic and security benefactor to ease the burdens on the weakened regime.<sup>218</sup>

By successfully negotiating a peace with Anwar Sadat, Israel dismantled the Pan-Arab nationalist bloc united against them. Furthermore, occupation of the Sinai did not necessarily advance the security interests of Israel because it extended their military and its supply lines. Instead, surrendering the natural buffer between the states was favorable combined with concessions that regulate Egyptian military presence in the peninsula. For Israel, the peace accord reduces the threat of invasion from the south, and secures the United States as a military and economic benefactor.<sup>219</sup>

Throughout Israel's existence, the quest for security led the state to make relationships with external benefactors to derive the economic and security benefits associated with the arrangement. Initially, it was the Soviet Union, then the French, and now the United States. Currently, Israel is the largest beneficiary of U.S. economic and military aid in the world. This relationship allows Israel to maintain a strong economy by offsetting military costs while developing a healthy technological industry regarded as one of the most advanced in the world. In 1996, Israel's gross domestic product (GDP) was approximately 50 percent greater than the combined GDPs of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Israel's economic strength, combined with advanced technological and military capabilities is a considerable element of Israel's stability and security, as both create leverage over their Arab neighbors. Without a benefactor like the United States, that advantage diminishes.<sup>220</sup>

As a U.S. ally, Israel's aggressive behavior is occasionally a liability for the United States, but the existence of the relationship implies that Israel has no ambitions to become a regional hegemon. The U.S. must prevent the rise of regional hegemons that could threaten their own interests in the Middle East. A regional hegemon with significant military capabilities and a strong economy would also be a competitor and potential threat to the existence of Israel. Without regional hegemons, economic and military advantages give Israel the flexibility to manage regional relationships with other states exclusively, each with their own level of cooperation, hostility and threat capability. Rather than more inclusive and multilateral

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<sup>218</sup> Hinnibusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-130. 340-341

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, p. 115-136.

arrangements, dissimilar state-to-state relationships comprised of unique conditions allow Israel to address specific areas of mutual interests, while also maintaining a defensive military posture intended to deter aggressive behavior. Israel reinforces this deterrent with a non-disclosed nuclear weapons program and calculated displays of its military capability through precision strikes and targeted campaigns against specific individuals, groups, or objectives associated with a potential threat or provocateur. Such targeted strikes include the 1981 attack on the Osirak nuclear reactor in Iraq, the bombing of the Palestinian Liberation Organization headquarters in Tunisia in 1985, an attack on a Syrian nuclear facility in 2007, multiple campaigns in southern Lebanon against Hezbollah, operations in Gaza, as well as numerous assassinations and airstrikes against other perceived threats.<sup>221</sup> Despite the international condemnation associated with this aggressive national security policy, the October War of 1973 was the last military assault against Israel involving conventional forces from neighboring states. The lack of multi-lateral peace arrangements isolates the conditions of each and makes it more difficult to build a united Arab coalition against them, while the aggressive military posture demonstrates the potential cost of resuming hostilities.<sup>222</sup>

Israel prevented military confrontation in the Middle East since 1978 using this policy of divide and deter. However, the apparent Arab-Israeli conflict continues to be a destabilizing factor in the region. The reason is the presence of the Palestinian territories and conflicting interpretations of sovereignty associated with Israeli identity. Identity in Israel is destabilizing because both Zionists and practical realists appear to prioritize the security interests of the state, creating the perception of unity among the Israeli population regarding national security. However, inconsistencies arise on the question of Israeli sovereignty because the Palestinian territories are not recognized as by sovereign boundary. The Israelis and Palestinians did mutually recognize one another during the Oslo accords signed in 1993, and led to the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied Palestinian territories and grant them the right to self-govern.<sup>223</sup> However, the boundaries are not sovereign, and the combination of Zionist ambitions and the border ambiguity creates a situation where the secular and ideological interests of the state are incompatible.

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<sup>221</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-136

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-136

Many nationalities and ethnicities exist worldwide that happen to be Christian, Muslim, etc. For Jewish people, their religious and ethnic identities appear to be more intertwined. Prior to Israel's creation, the Jewish identity was a target for eradication. The result was a transmission of an aggressive defensive posture that currently influences the state of Israel's approach to national security, often leading to destabilizing policies that are uncharacteristic of states in a realist system.<sup>224</sup> The internal instability within the Jewish state involves an attempt to reconcile interests influenced by the Zionist identity, and the more secular realist concerns regarding the security of the state. The threat posed by Zionism within Israel is its influence on foreign policy, and the destabilizing effects their aggressive defensive posture has on the region.<sup>225</sup>

A cornerstone of the Zionist identity is irredentism regarding Jewish sovereignty over the Levant. Zionists believe in the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Levant, with Jerusalem as the capital, as described in their Torah. These biblical boundaries incorporate the territories in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, parts of southern Lebanon, and the disputed Golan Heights along Israel's border with Syria. Zionists do not want to absorb the Palestinian community and grant the Arabs Israeli citizenship because it would reduce the Jewish political majority and diminish the Jewish identity of the state.<sup>226</sup> However, Israelis that focus on the geopolitical complexity of their situation in the region believe that preserving the Jewish state requires a more secular approach to interests and regional relationships.<sup>227</sup> Yitzhak Rabin was one such individual.

Much of Israel's progress towards cooperation with Arab neighbors is due to what Rabin accomplished, and Israel's continued participation in the peace process suggests that some Israelis believe Zionist ambitions are actually a risk to the security of the Jewish state.<sup>228</sup> If Israelis support a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian issue, then they expect their government to negotiate that peace. Rabin's military background and service as Defense Minister before his tenure as Prime Minister made him popular, and led few to question his loyalty to Israel. However, during his tenure as Prime Minister from 1992 to 1995, he appeared to stress territorial compromise as means to obtaining greater security. While he rejected international pressure for Israel to return to pre-1967 borders, he did declare at a Labor Party convention in 1991 that Israel should prepare to forfeit "many kilometers" of territory to advance peace with regional

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<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Hinnebusch, Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 132-133

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

neighbors.<sup>229</sup> Before his assassination in 1995, Rabin condoned and influenced the Oslo accord process initiated by Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin and continued by Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. He also went to great lengths to negotiate a treaty with Damascus, offering to surrender some of the Golan Heights to Syria in exchange for a more permanent peace. Apparently, Rabin's framework for peace with the Assad regime in Syria also included the establishment of diplomatic ties, and a withdrawal of Israel from the rest of the territory to make it a demilitarized zone.<sup>230</sup> Syria's Assad did not accept the terms of the agreement, but Rabin's efforts to reconcile the Palestinian issue and improve relationships with Arab neighbors were significant enough to gain recognition from the International community. In 1994, Rabin shared the Nobel Peace Prize with other leaders involved in the process.<sup>231</sup> Despite this, his actions remained a point of contention in Israel because the Zionists opposed the surrender of occupied territories, as well as the other concessions associated with the Oslo negotiations.

Since Rabin, other Israeli Prime Ministers, including Ehud Barak (1999-2001) and Ehud Olmert (2006-2009), attempted to use the Golan Heights as a bargaining chip in peace negotiations with Syria; however, all of these negotiations failed and Israel continues to occupy the territory.<sup>232</sup> The Golan Heights have significant strategic importance because they are an elevated, and easily defendable geographic feature that would put many Israeli populations centers well within the range of Syrian heavy weapons platforms and/or Iranian-made rockets used by Islamist groups. With an unstable Syria and current hostilities with the Assad regime, maintaining the Golan is a strategic buffer Israel will hold to counter any threats from Syria. Northwest of the Golan, the Iranian backed Shi'ite group, Hezbollah, launches occasional attacks on Israel from southern Lebanon.<sup>233</sup> Hamas and Sunni Arab Islamists groups attack from the Palestinian territories to the east and south. While these groups pose a threat to individual Israeli citizens, without significant assistance from a state entity, they represent a marginal threat to the survival of the Israeli state. However, a persisting Palestinian issue and the aggressive Israeli

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<sup>229</sup> Hinnebusch, Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 132-133

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid, p. 115-136

<sup>233</sup> STRATFOR: "Syria's Golan Gambit". *Geopolitical Diary*, Sept. 2006.

<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/geopolitical-diary-syrias-golan-gambit>

response appears to be eroding the Jewish State's political capital, gradually creating unstable conditions that could threaten the survival of the state.<sup>234</sup>

As condemnation within the international community continues to grow, populations voice their displeasure, putting additional stress on neighboring regimes. Lebanon is currently controlled by a government designed to deter sectarian division; however, the lack of decisive leadership makes it weak, enabling Hezbollah to continue to influence the state's southern border with Israel. The current monarchy in Jordan relies upon good relations with Israel to advance its security interests and secure aid from the U.S. However, the recent Arab Spring threatened to destabilize Jordan, and the monarchy faced large demonstrations organized by Islamist opposition affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite political and military cooperation over the past decade, Israel's relationship with Turkey continues to deteriorate since 2010.<sup>235</sup> That year, activist groups launched aid flotillas to break the Israeli blockade of Gaza, and three activists were killed when Israeli commandos met violent resistance as they boarded the ships. Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan loudly condemned Israel, and since then the rhetoric out of Ankara is increasingly hostile.<sup>236</sup> While the secular Turkish military continues to have to cooperate with Israel, the Turkish political system resembles a democracy.<sup>237</sup> Currently, the Turkish government is in the hands of the Islamist party affiliated to the Muslim Brotherhood and sympathetic to the Palestinian cause. As a result, any cooperation with Israel (or lack thereof) will remain a politically relevant topic, so Israel expects the occasional unfriendly government in Ankara. Democracy encourages shifts in policies and opinions, but because Lebanese and Syrian territory between Turkey and Israel, Turkey poses little threat to Israel's security.<sup>238</sup> However, Israel's current cooperation with President Sisi suggests that they have no desire for such political inconsistency in Egypt.

The secular military regime in Egypt provides an anchor for Israeli security, as they are a secular institution, have a strong military hostile to Islamic opposition, and they remain influential amongst Arab populations. Their consistent involvement in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process as a mediator lends both states international credibility. The two states also share a

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<sup>234</sup> Hinnebusch, Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-136

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> STRATFOR: "The U.S. Role in Warming Israel-Turkish Relations". *Analysis*. March, 2013.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/us-role-warming-israeli-turkish-relations>

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

significant ally in the United States, and the monarchies in Jordan and the Gulf States face similar threats from Islamist opposition groups. For the security interests of the state, Israel, sees this network of mutual interests and common threats as a protection from potential invasion, and a counter to Iran and Syria.<sup>239</sup>

Due to the instability in Syria, the already defensive Israelis will likely remain preoccupied with security. Therefore, the security of the Jewish state depends on the identity conflict between Zionism and the secular state interests of Israel. The identity conflict effects relations with neighboring states because of the influence it has over Israel's definition of state boundaries, perception of threats, and the aggressiveness of their defense.<sup>240</sup>

Even if negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians were to result in the establishment of a two state solution, the significance of the Egyptian relationship would remain. The conditions of poverty in Palestine would likely last for several years, as even the most successful economic strategies are gradual.<sup>241</sup> Similarly, Middle Eastern regimes would likely continue to deflect internal discontent with anti-Israel rhetoric, and it is doubtful that Islamist groups who oppose Israel's existence will change their position due to the establishment of a Palestinian state. As a result, cooperation between the two states would still be in their best interests because there is no guarantee that a two state solution would stabilize the region, or improve Israel's relations with other regional actors.

The cooperation between the Israeli and Egyptian militaries, combined with Jordan's maintenance of Palestinian refugee camps, helps limit the amount of illicit money, weapons, and human traffic entering Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>242</sup> Therefore, Israel's current cooperative relationships with the two states will remain a significant part of Israel's security. Israel would prefer the military regime in Egypt because democracy could destabilize the relationship. At best, it would resemble Israel's current relationship with Turkey, and any draw down in military cooperation might result in an increase of militant capabilities in the Palestinian territories. More activity would likely result in Israeli reprisals, only aggravating local hostilities towards Israel. Since opposition to Israel is already popular in Egypt, the worst case scenario for Israel is that a

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<sup>239</sup> STRATFOR: "Syria, Iran and the Balance of Power in the Middle East". *Analysis*. Nov., 2011.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20111121-syria-iran-and-balance-power-middle-east>

<sup>240</sup> Hinnebusch, Ehteshami, *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 115-136.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid.

<sup>242</sup> STRATFOR: "The Weakening of Egypt's Military State". *Geopolitical Weekly*, July 2013.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/weakening-egypts-military-state>



democratically elected government might eventually seek to bolster its credibility by abolishing the peace treaty signed by Sadat.

Before the peace, the Egyptian military regime and Israel knew nothing but conflict. With the presence of militant groups, conflicts regarding identity, and mutual preoccupations with security and stability, nullifying the peace would likely destabilize the region. If such a scenario did materialize, much would depend on how much influence the Egyptian military retained over foreign policy, and whether or not they would reassure the Israelis with indirect negotiations in an attempt to continue cooperation. Even as a symbolic political gesture by a new Egyptian government, an end to the peace would create a complicated diplomatic situation. As a result, Israel's security interests would require them to take a more aggressive defensive posture on their southern border.<sup>243</sup>

## United States

Before WWII, the United States had little interest in the Middle East.<sup>244</sup> The U.S. had sufficient domestic oil production to meet the local demand, so the influences on U.S. policy in the region were the interests of oil companies and U.S. allies in the West, primarily Britain. Middle Eastern governments were eager to take advantage of the valuable newly discovered resource, but needed the knowledge and expertise of experienced oil companies to develop the necessary infrastructure to produce and export it. Post WWI, European governments still had many of their colonial era tendencies, and collaborated and competed with American oil companies to negotiate generous contracts with the fledgling Middle Eastern states.<sup>245</sup> Eager for the potential revenue and legitimacy, young regimes made arrangements with oil companies that bordered on the lines of exploitation, and grievances intensified as local populations witnessed jobs and profits going to foreigners. Of course, regimes deflected the criticism by blaming European governments and Euro/American oil companies, associating Americans with the anti-colonial feelings of the time.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>243</sup> STRATFOR: "The Weakening of Egypt's Military State". *Geopolitical Weekly*, July 2013.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/weakening-egypts-military-state>

<sup>244</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, 257-260

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-260

WWII was a turning-point for U.S. policy in the Middle East because it highlighted the strategic significance of oil, and that access to such strategic positions and resources is as important as preventing adversaries to them. Oil was not only essential for modern militaries, but as modernization led to an increase in international demand, it became an essential commodity within the global marketplace. Thus, influencing the supply became a cornerstone of U.S. policy to gain leverage over the global economy during the Cold War. As tensions with the Soviet Union mounted, so did U.S. commitment to the Middle East.

Over the course of the Cold War, the United States sought to contain the spread of communist influence worldwide. In the Middle East, that meant promoting stability in the region and establishing strong ties with regimes with strategic significance. As mentioned before, the United States and the Soviet Union had sufficient domestic oil supplies; however, U.S. allies did not. The oil trade was not only important to give U.S. allies access to supply but it acted as a foundation to the free-market system that built ties between capitalist states, while alienating the Soviet Union for the global economy.<sup>247</sup> As a result, the United States sought to repair its relations, stabilize, and project influence over the Middle East. The 1954 National Security Council report entitled, "United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East", reflected such goals when it incorporated the following:

- Availability to the United States and its allies of the resources, the strategic position, and the passage rights of the area and denial of such resources and strategic positions to the Soviet bloc.
- Settlement of major issues between Arab states and Israel as a foundation for establishing peace and order in the area.
- Reversal of the anti-American trends of Arab opinion.<sup>248</sup>

As the Cold War evolved, so did U.S. goals in the Middle East. Regional dynamics and shifting coalitions had the U.S. searching for consistent allies in the region. Early on, Iran and Israel became the most reliable, as Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Jordan were occasionally changing their allegiances to balance one another.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

<sup>249</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-260

As the rivalry with the Soviets continued, aid to U.S. allies and the arms race between the superpowers put stress on the value of U.S. currency. Rather than rely on the material in which money is made, the value of modern currency derives from the relationship between the supply and demand of a physical commodity. After WWII, the allies agreed to fix their exchange rates within 1 percent of one another by pledging to buy and sell U.S. dollars. In return, the U.S. agreed to sell gold at a fixed market price of \$35 an ounce to all countries that agreed to this proposal. The U.S. had an abundance of the metal at the time, but as international monetary conditions changed, the United States had a hard time keeping enough gold on the open-market to keep the price of gold from going above \$35 an ounce.<sup>250</sup> However, as the unsustainability of maintaining the gold standard became apparent, Nixon negotiated the Petro-dollar arrangement with Saudi Arabia to prevent the dollar from becoming a fiat currency (not backed by a physical commodity). Backing U.S. currency with oil from the Gulf States (specifically Saudi Arabia and Kuwait) did not change U.S. policy in the region; however, it did magnify the strategic value of the region in regards to U.S. interests.<sup>251</sup>

Originally, U.S. interest in the Middle East entailed protecting access to oil in the region for the sake of U.S. allies, and preventing the spread of communist influence. Since leftist ideologies often coincided with revolutionary sentiments in a population, stability was important for the application of this strategy. As a result, the U.S. prioritized the formation of stable governments through military and economic aid, and promises to renew efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>252</sup> With the additional security obligations to protect the Saudi regime (and its ally, Kuwait), the U.S. insured that their interests in the region would transcend the initial Cold War objectives.<sup>253</sup> Soon after this arrangement, U.S. involvement in the Iran Iraq war and the preoccupation with Iranian affairs following the overthrow of Reza Shah, also reflect the redoubling of U.S. efforts in the region.<sup>254</sup>

Before Iran's revolution in 1979, it was a strategic ally to the U.S. because Reza Shah's secular approach to government, and Iran's proximity to the Soviet Union. Iran also had a domestic supply of oil that the United States wanted to keep out of Soviet hands, and their pro-western regime was conducive to U.S. interests in the regime. However, the unaddressed

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<sup>250</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 52

<sup>251</sup> Ibid, p. 183, 194.

<sup>252</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-275

<sup>253</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 182-189

<sup>254</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-275

grievances within the regime led the emergence of an opposition that rallied around the Shiite religious identity.<sup>255</sup> Due to the United States's support of the Shah, the opposition sacked the U.S. Embassy on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1979, took Americans hostage, and replaced the Shah with a new Shiite leadership.<sup>256</sup> With the significant differences between the Shiite and Sunni sects described earlier in this work, the new Shiite leadership in Iran represented a direct threat to the religious authority and legitimacy of the Saudi regime. When Iraq invaded soon after the revolution, they did so with the support of the United States. However, shortly after the Reagan administration came into office, the U.S. secured the release of the hostages and began supporting the Iranians against Saddam Hussein.

The United States did not switch allegiances in the Iran Iraq war to produce an alternative victor, but rather to ensure a stalemate and contain the conflict. With a decisive victory, either side could emerge as a potential regional hegemon, and/or become an immediate and credible threat to Saudi Arabia. By choosing to support both sides of the conflict, the U.S. policy was consistent with its interest in stability throughout the region.

In 1981, deputy assistant secretary for Near East and South Asian affairs, Peter Constable, alludes to the additional policy objectives that emerged following Nixon's arrangement with Saudi Arabia. In a testimony before congress, he affirms U.S. commitments to promote security among friends, assure the security and availability of resources, and the protection of vital transportation and communication routes.<sup>257</sup> While the themes of strategic value and stability remain, the policy language shifts from a stance that seeks to "promote" stability, to one that intends to "protect" it.<sup>258</sup> The primary difference, instead of only preventing the spread of communism, the U.S. interest in Middle East stability now extends to protecting the trade of oil and the status of U.S. currency.

U.S. willingness to protect stability does not imply that the U.S. use force in every conflict in the Middle East, but it does seem to intentionally portray force as an option.<sup>259</sup> Perhaps, by presenting itself as a credible threat, the United States seeks to deter any regimes ambitions to become a regional hegemon, and/or discourage international competitors from

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<sup>255</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-275

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. p. 258-265

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Gelvin, James L. *The Modern Middle East: A History*, p. 257-275

encroaching on this sphere of influence.<sup>260</sup> At the very least, the U.S. continues to show a willingness to continue its policy of supplying military and financial aid to friendly regimes long after the Cold War, providing them with the necessary resources to maintain their own stability.

The strategy the U.S. deploys in the region is primarily diplomatic, using political capital and its credibility as a military threat as a tool to develop security based relationships to create a stable environment that will not threaten U.S. interests. Since regimes in the region have to constantly balance interests of the state with those of competing identities, they face consistent threats at both the domestic and state level. As a result, U.S. propositions of financial and/or military aid to promote stability are attractive to many regimes, and Egypt is no exception. Egypt is essential for U.S. interests in the region because of two vital geopolitical characteristics of the state. First, its proximity to Israel. Second, the Suez Canal.

Israel is important to the United States because of its relatively stable, western friendly government. The role the U.S. played in Israel's conception means that they invested a substantial amount of political capital in the Jewish state's survival. Originally, the U.S. hoped to improve its image in the region by broking a deal to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian issue. While this U.S. goal remains elusive, the situation is just as likely to erode U.S. political capital as it is to yield it. However, the U.S. is likely to continue these attempts because the practice of holding talks, with Egyptian mediators present, because they raise the political capital of all parties involved. The very perception of seeking a solution adds to the domestic and international legitimacy of the regimes that participate. Egypt's continued role as a neutral arbiter since 1979, affirms their significance in U.S. policy towards the region.<sup>261</sup>

In the early 1980s, the U.S. saw Anwar Sadat's pro-western realignment of Egyptian foreign as an important step towards stability in the region. The U.S. no longer had to deal with the anxiety of the rise of a Pan-Arab state that could contend for the position of regional hegemon, or worry about becoming an ally Egypt of the communists. When Sadat signed the peace accord with Israel, the U.S. saw their stability effort materializing. However, the assassination of Sadat once again reminded regional state actors of the relevance of identity, and acted as another turning point in U.S., Arab, and Israeli relations.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 105-110

<sup>262</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 105-110

While the peace treaty with Israel continues to be unpopular domestically, being arbiter for Arab-Israeli negotiations is one of many benefits that Egypt extracts from this arrangement. Given that Israel and Egypt are the two primary recipients of U.S. aid in the region, it is clear that the U.S. put great value on peace and cooperation between the two states. Furthermore, since Israel is the primary target of religious discontent in the region, Egypt can carefully use this leverage to temporarily divert domestic grievances. Contrarily, the military regime can cooperate discretely with U.S. and Israeli counterparts to identify and pursue mutual threats. The duality of the Egyptian regime is necessary to manage the local discontent associated with cooperation with U.S. and Israel, while also reassuring the two states that it is committed to upholding the peace and maintaining stability.<sup>263</sup>

Egypt also play an important role in the global economy because the Suez Canal is a vital trade artery that connects the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean, and eventually the Atlantic. As mentioned earlier, Egypt maintains its sovereignty over sea lane, but a Multi-national force works with the Egyptian military to oversee day-to-day operations, ensuring the security and efficiency of trade through the canal. For the United States, it is critical to the welfare of the oil trade and the global economy. The presence of the multi-national force was the result of the peace treaty signed with Israel, and this affiliation is significant because it affirms the commitment of external states to the Egyptian-Israeli peace and the protection of the Suez. The coalition of external international actors also advances Egypt's security interests by acting as a deterrent against potential foreign invaders.

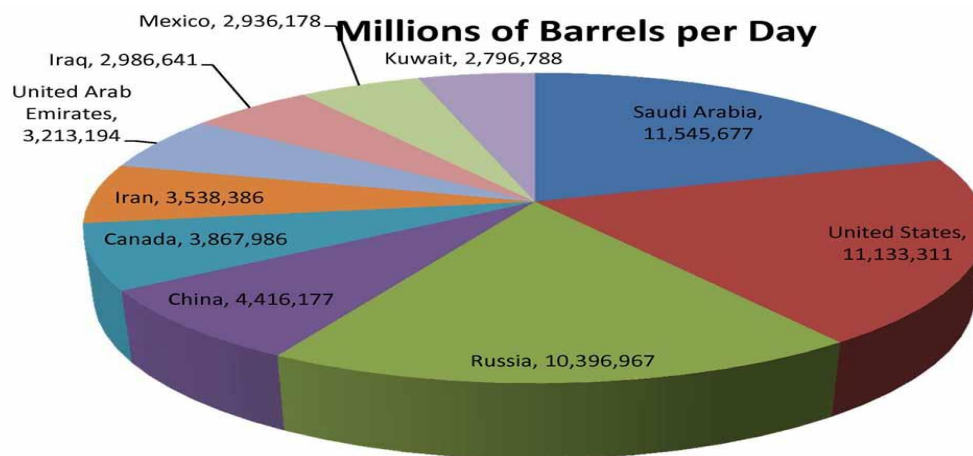
The U.S. seeks to counter the rise of any regional hegemon that could potentially threaten the transportation of the resource to the global economy. The most significant threat to the U.S. is the potential of Iranian hegemony in the Middle East. The reason lies in Iran's relationship with Russia, its sectarian-based hostilities with Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. dollar's connection to the oil trade. As mentioned in the section on Saudi Arabia, Iraq's population consists of a large Shi'ite majority. With a government that is now dominated by Shi'ites, it is possible that Iran could have significant influence over Baghdad. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia's oil reserves exist within a territory occupied by its Shi'ite minority. Due to Saudi Arabia's small military in relation to Iran's, the Kingdom is extremely vulnerable to invasion and/or an Iranian-backed Shi'ite insurrection. With current U.S. allies controlling much of the world's oil production,

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

trade of the resource in U.S. dollars will continue. However, if Saudi Arabia were to lose control over its oil reserves, the fate of the U.S. dollar would be in jeopardy. This is due to their combined percentage of the world's daily oil production. (See Figure 2) A primary threat to U.S. security and economic interests involves the potential use of an alternative currency in the global oil trade. This would have the effect of turning the U.S. dollar into a fiat currency, meaning not backed by a physical commodity.<sup>264</sup> With the U.S. debt nearing 20 trillion dollars, such a scenario would be detrimental for the U.S. economy.<sup>265</sup>

(Figure 2)



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Although the scenario might seem unlikely, states do not ignore such risks to their survival. This is the reason for U.S. security assurances to Saudi Arabia, and why good relations with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Egypt are a crucial of U.S. policy in the region. While direct cooperation between the three states might be limited and/or conditional, the states play an important role in U.S. attempts to prevent Iranian hegemony.<sup>267</sup> Through these security based relationships, the U.S. has the influence and the capabilities to protect its interests in the region.

By allowing the removal of Mubarak, the U.S. was not necessarily ignoring its security obligations to allies in the region. While it may temporarily damage their credibility, it does

<sup>264</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 182-185

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> The Countries: "Top 10 Oil Producing Countries in the World 2013-2014".2015  
<http://www.thecountriesof.com/top-10-oil-producing-countries-in-the-world-2013-2014/>

<sup>267</sup> STRATFOR: "A Middle Eastern Balance of Power Emerges". *Geopolitical Diary*. March, 2015.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/middle-eastern-balance-power-emerges>

reveal limitations regarding the extent of U.S. commitments and suggests that the U.S. will only intervene if it is crucial to protecting U.S. interests. Given the history of regional animosity associated with external intervention, U.S. distancing from the Egyptian military's forceful removal of Mohammed Morsi is understandable due to the potential destabilizing consequences associated with the perception of their involvement/endorsement of a military coup. Despite delays in the delivery of some military equipment, the U.S. did recently resume aid to Egypt, implying a level of comfort with the state's current political situation.<sup>268</sup> The continuation of military political dominance in Egypt does little to change the circumstance of the relationship; thus, the effects of the revolution on U.S. interests appear to be minimal. While the demands of international legitimacy require the U.S. to support democratic movements throughout the world, U.S. aid to Egypt, particularly to the Egyptian military, reflects its interests in protecting stability and the status of the U.S. dollar vis-à-vis the oil trade.<sup>269</sup>

## Conclusion

A theme throughout this work is the importance of influence and legitimacy in the stability of Middle Eastern regimes. When a state is unable to secure interests and meet the demands of the state, local populations will sometimes mobilize behind their religious and cultural affiliations to express grievances. While the stability of the Saudi state relies on religious legitimacy in collaboration with government subsidies from oil wealth, the Egyptian military regime uses its position Egyptian society and reputation as a credible military force to wield influence. Furthermore, the presence of the Arab League headquarters in Cairo affirms their leadership role in the region, making them a significant part of U.S. policy as a diplomatic conduit between the United States and the Arab world. By upholding the peace with Israel, Egypt secures the economic and military aid that allow it a credible force in the region. Egypt also establishes itself as a partner in U.S. policy initiatives throughout the region. Peace and cooperation between Israel and Egypt, is an anchor of stability that secures the Levant, the Suez Canal, and Saudi Arabia's western flank. Democracy in Egypt is destabilizing because of the

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<sup>268</sup> Londono, Ernesto. "U.S. to Partially Resume Military Aid to Egypt". National Security. *The Washington Post*. April, 2014. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-to-partially-resume-military-aid-to-egypt/2014/04/22/b25f68c6-ca91-11e3-93eb-6c0037dde2ad\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-to-partially-resume-military-aid-to-egypt/2014/04/22/b25f68c6-ca91-11e3-93eb-6c0037dde2ad_story.html)

<sup>269</sup> Katusa, Marin. *The Colder War*, p. 52



perpetual cycle of anxiety and insecurity it would create for both Israel and Saudi Arabia. The peace accord with Israel remains widely unpopular among the Egyptian population. In Saudi Arabia, the rise of any political party that associates with a religious identity presents itself as a potential challenger to Saudi legitimacy vis-à-vis religious authority. Therefore, the return of the status quo in Egypt is arguably better for U.S., Saudi, and Israeli interests in the region.

As a secular institution, the Egyptian military currently presents no immediate ideological threat to Israel or Saudi Arabia. Due to recent disagreements regarding current events, there appears to be tension between the U.S. government and their allies in Egypt, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. Current negotiations with Iran, while disconcerting for U.S. allies, is only an alternative strategy the U.S. is exploring in an attempt to reduce hostilities. Furthermore, following two long conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, it appears that the U.S. is temporarily prioritizing attempts to strengthen its domestic legitimacy. This might explain the withholding of military aid to Egypt and U.S. indecisiveness regarding a current strategy in Iraq and Syria. However, U.S. interests require good relations with each state in order to maintain stability. Even if the U.S. continues to take a cautious approach to the region, it appears that Russia is willing to advantage, evident by their recent dealings with the military regime in Egypt.

## Chapter: 6

### Interest and Security Going Forward

Given the international interests and investment in Egyptian stability, the current political circumstances provide an opportunity for the military establishment to strengthen its position in government and society. With the prospect of a Mubarak dynasty no longer present, the military exercised its monopoly on the use of force to remove its most formidable political opposition. They also succeeded in co-opting important segments of the population and initiating international dialogue to secure external sources of aid. Fortunately for the military establishment, the current domestic and international climate are conducive to the stability of the current regime.

#### *Egypt: Geopolitics of Security*

The geopolitical context of Egypt makes comparisons to other states extremely difficult, as a unique combination of interests converge at their location. Egypt is currently surrounded by a destabilized Gaza strip, Sinai, Libya, and Sudan.<sup>270</sup> This creates multiple challenges that make the Egyptian security situation truly unique. Throughout history, Egyptian rulers had to be aware of their geographic advantages in regards to the ruling the population. With the Mediterranean to the north, desert to the west, south, and in the Sinai, Egypt's natural landscape minimizes the threat of foreign invasion. Furthermore, it limits the habitable territory that the regime must secure and govern. Given the size of Egypt's population, the military has to carefully calculate when use of force against a domestic threat. The geographical barriers provide the military with the means to contain those threats. The military effectively was able to effectively neutralize the Brotherhood because the natural landscape restricted the Brothers' ability to evade security forces. Therefore, as long as the regime is able to limit the scope of internal opposition and secure foreign sources of aid, they increase their chances of survival.<sup>271</sup>

Isolated along the Nile, Egypt's population is far removed from large quantities of external support and propaganda meant to destabilize, allowing security forces to mitigate

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<sup>270</sup> STRATFOR: "The Egyptian Military: Fighting Enemies Domestic, Not Foreign". *Analysis*. Nov. 2014.  
<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/egyptian-military-fighting-enemies-domestic-not-foreign>

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

internal discontent by monitoring information and detaining political agitators.<sup>272</sup> Since the population is large, but confined, the geographical conditions enable Egyptian security forces to respond to discontent without spreading military resources too thin. Here, Egypt deploys the First Field Army. This unit is the most senior in the Egyptian military, and contains its elite Republican Guard division. The First Field Army specializes in both urban and mechanized warfare. The unit also protects the western border with an unstable Libya, the southern border with an unstable Sudan, and the west bank of the Suez Canal. As the only military unit with the authority to operate within Central Cairo, it also acts as the caretaker of the regime. In October of 2014, Sisi signed a Presidential decree that put critical civilian infrastructure, including universities, under military jurisdiction.<sup>273</sup> The decree renders public property as ðequivalent to military facilitiesö, authorizing the regime to prosecute all crimes on public property in military tribunals.<sup>274</sup> With this decree, the military can arrest political agitators while avoiding the standard judicial processes. As the military's most elite unit, Figure 3 illustrates the priorities of the regime regarding the control of the Egyptian population.

(Figure 3)

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<sup>272</sup> STRATFOR: "The Egyptian Military: Fighting Enemies Domestic, Not Foreign"

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Kingsley, Patrick. "Egypt Places Civilian Infrastructure under Army Jurisdiction". The Guardian, Oct. 2014.  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/oct/28/egypt-civilian-infrastructure-army-jurisdiction-military-court>



Outside of the primary population centers, Egypt has sovereignty over the desolate Sinai Peninsula. Here, it shares a border with Israel and Gaza, and has sovereignty over a land bridge that connects two continents (Africa and Asia). At this location, The Second Field Army acts as caretaker to the Gaza border crossing, as well as the east bank of the Suez Canal.<sup>276</sup> As mentioned earlier, plays an important role in global trade.<sup>277</sup> So much so, that Nasser nationalizing the sea lane made Egypt a target for invasion in 1956. However, the Protocol to the Treaty of Peace signed in 1981, established an Egyptian Suez Canal Authority (SCA) and a Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) to cooperate in canal security.<sup>278</sup> The peace accord and presence of the MFO at the Suez acts as an additional protection against invasion, as the external force would also be taking hostile action against the states represented by the MFO. Furthermore, this multinational presence relies upon the existing peace treaty with Israel. Therefore, any threat to the peace with Israel, indirectly threatens the existing status of the Suez Canal and the security of Egypt.<sup>279</sup>

<sup>275</sup> STRATFOR: "The Egyptian Military: Fighting Enemies Domestic, Not Foreign"

<sup>276</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Egypt: From Eternal Stability to Turmoil". *Geopolitical Diary*, April 2012.

<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/geopolitics-egypt-eternal-stability-turmoil>

<sup>277</sup> STRATFOR: "The Challenge of Blocking the Suez Canal". *Geopolitical Weekly*, September 2013.

<http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/challenge-blocking-suez-canal> \_ the shipping lane connects Africa, the Near East, and Asia, to international markets in Europe and North America.

<sup>278</sup> Oswald, Bruce. *Documents on the Law of UN Peace Operations*. (Oxford University Press, Nov. 2011)

<sup>279</sup> STRATFOR: "The Challenge of Blocking the Suez Canal"

East of the Suez Canal is the Sinai Peninsula. While the geography of the Sinai acts as a buffer from any potential large-scale threats originating from the east, the territory is extremely difficult to monitor. This makes Egypt vulnerable to infiltration from small criminal, militant, or espionage elements. The Sinai's proximity to Israel only exacerbates this condition, acting as an ideal staging point for asymmetric groups that wish to attack Israel. The result is a constant flow of weapons, human traffic, and militant activity that could not only threaten the peace with Israel, but compromise the security of the Egyptian state.<sup>280</sup> The Second and Third Field Armies are estimated around 90,000, with infantry and armored units whose original purpose was to protect the state from foreign invasion. However, more recent mandates include securing the borders with Israel and Gaza, defending the Arab Gas Pipeline, and managing criminal and militant activity within the in the Peninsula.<sup>281</sup> The peace with Israel limits the amount of forces Egypt can deploy in the Sinai. As a result, the military has to communicate all operations and activity within the territory to Israel to prevent violating the treaty.

Egypt's shared border with both Gaza and Israel puts the country at the crossroads of a controversial ideological, religious, and humanitarian debate with many international and regional implications.<sup>282</sup> While peace with Israel secures Egypt's access to financial and military aid from the United States, the peace with the Jewish state is contrary to Arab sympathy for the Palestinian cause. This forces the regime to constantly balance internal political discourse with regional security.<sup>283</sup> Third and Second Army cooperation with Israel along this border is extremely controversial, but an essential element in maintaining the peace.<sup>284</sup> Due to Israel's mutual interest in limiting militant activity in the Sinai, the Israelis have given Egypt permission to increase the total number of brigades operating in the territory.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>280</sup> STRATFOR: "Egypt's Military Looks to Manage Sinai Militants". *Analysis*, July 2013.

<http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/egypts-military-looks-manage-sinai-militants>

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 91-92

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, p. 108-110

<sup>284</sup> STRATFOR: "The Egyptian Military: Fighting Enemies Domestic, Not Foreign"

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

## *Neutralizing Opposition*

Immediately after the removal of Mubarak, the military regime needed to address the divisions between the business elite and the old military establishment. Unlike the later crackdowns on the Brotherhood, handling this opposition was a more delicate matter. The holding companies consisted of the most profitable industries in key economic sectors, some of which rely upon existing partnerships with foreign investors. As a result, the military did not want to dismantle the business elite's assets for fear of the wider economic implications. Furthermore, the business elites proved successful at facilitating growth and attracting foreign investments. Therefore, the regime chose to detain only key members of Gamal's inner circle who previously exercised political ambitions. Among three of the top elites detained or sought on international arrest warrants were former housing minister Ahmed al-Maghrabi, former tourism minister Zuhair Garana, and steel entrepreneur, Ahmed Ezz.<sup>286</sup> The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) also began investigations on other prominent business elites, publishing a "blacklist" of suspects to prohibit them from freely disposing of their wealth.<sup>287</sup> The military allowed some of these individuals to leave the country, leaving their businesses relatively intact. As a result, the Bank for International Settlements estimates that foreign banks' liabilities to Egyptian citizens increased by more than \$6 billion during the first quarter of 2011 alone.<sup>288</sup>

The precision and selective approach by the military to pursue corruption allegations against the business elite is evident in the fact that by September 2012, the Illicit Gains Authority within the Justice Ministry referred only 29 of 597 reported cases to the courts. The SCAF also made amendments to investment legislation which made it possible to avoid charges of corruption, embezzlement, or tax evasion with out of court settlements.<sup>289</sup> The military also put the General Authority for Investment (GAFI) in charge of building individual cases for such offenses. One of the primary roles of the GAFI is promoting investment in Egypt. Not wanting to exacerbate an already damaged investment climate, they were in a perfect position to determine who was essential and who was expendable. Furthermore, the simplicity of the process allowed

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<sup>286</sup> Roll, Stephen. "Egypt's Business Elite after Mubarak: A Powerful Player Between Generals and Brotherhood". Stiftung Institute for International and Security Affairs. Berlin, 2013.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

the director of GAFI to make and sign individual agreements with the businessperson in question. The SCAF amendment not only allowed these out of court settlements to absolve the business elite of previous transgressions but also possible future indictments; basically, allowing the individual to buy their way back into their position and continue their usual business practices.<sup>290</sup> Of course, there were several economic consequences. Numerous strikes occurred during and following the unrest, and work stoppages were common as business owners left or were under investigation. However, the foreign aspect of these industries and holdings enabled them to offset temporary domestic losses and survive the turmoil. Another significant provision by SCAF before the removal of Mubarak involved the funding of political parties. The law passed in March of 2011, outlawed state funding for political parties. Not repealing this law meant that, following the revolution, new parties had to scramble to secure domestic donations and support from prominent members of the business elite. Not only did the military establishment allow allies among the business elite to sponsor many of these parties, they encouraged it. In doing so, the regime gained the capability to compromise the political relevance of specific groups with well-placed political allies influencing their funds.<sup>291</sup> Through careful manipulation and selective legal coercion, the military establishment brought the business elite back into the fold with minimal damage to the military regime.

To ensure stability of the regime following the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood, the military set out to neutralize the organization by detaining its key members and dismantling its financial support network. Prior to the Morsi Presidency, such a move might have been widely condemned by the Egyptian population. However, the Brotherhood facilitated their own demise by alienating the population and ignoring the stated aims of the revolution.<sup>292</sup> The military was able to systematically dismantle the organization by detaining key members, and confiscating Brotherhood property and businesses. Recently, the Egyptian courts also recently upheld 183 death sentences against Muslim Brotherhood members, with 125 sentences pending. In addition, the court confiscated property of more than 901 members, with approximately another 166 confiscation orders imminent, and dissolved 169 Brotherhood NGOs.<sup>293</sup> President Sisi also

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<sup>290</sup> Roll, Stephen. "Egypt's Business Elite after Mubarak: A Powerful Player Between Generals and Brotherhood".

<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>293</sup> See\_ Ahram Online. "Property of 901 Brotherhood supporters confiscated since Morsi ouster". *Wednesday 21 Jan. 2015* <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/120895/Egypt/Politics-/Property-of--Brotherhood-supporters-confiscated-si.aspx> \_much of the property included schools, hospitals, and

signed off on a law on February 24, 2015, that designates the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization, giving the regime will also be able to freeze the group's financial assets within the country.<sup>294</sup> With the Muslim Brotherhood outlawed, much of its leadership detained, and their financial network dismantled, it appears that the regime successfully neutralized the organization as a political force in the short term.

### *Securing External Aid*

Due to its geopolitical location concerning the flow of resources, much of this work emphasized the historical context of the Middle East, and the significance of Egypt's stability regarding the economic interests of other states. Even as far back as ancient Persia, Greece, and Rome, Egypt stabilized its local economy through its exports, primarily of grain and textiles. Since feeding an empire was crucial for stability, Mediterranean powers provided Egypt with significant security guarantees in exchange for access to its resources.<sup>295</sup> Today, energy fuels the industrialized world, and much of that energy comes from oil. Although Egypt does not produce enough oil to even meet its own domestic demands, the Suez Canal remains a vital shipping lane in the oil trade and other commodities that affect the global economy.<sup>296</sup> Because of the historical significance of Egypt's geopolitical location regarding trade, Egyptian leaders always sought external benefactors seeking access or influence over the flow of resources. President Sisi and the current military establishment are no exception.

Currently, unemployment in Egypt is around 13% and an estimated 22% of about 70 million Egyptians are living below the poverty line. Egypt relies upon foreign assistance to stabilize the economy and avoid the potential devaluation of the Egyptian pound. A weaker Egyptian pound would lead to further inflation and an increase in food prices, potentially causing additional unrest by exacerbating the existing domestic grievances. Therefore, securing external sources of aid is critical for the stability of the Egyptian state if the military wants to maintain its political power. Throughout the entire period of unrest between 2011 and 2013, the military regime was extremely active diplomatically. The level of diplomatic engagement suggests that

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mosques. Combined with the NGOs, the facilities act as the social services network responsible for building the grassroots support for the organization.

<sup>294</sup> STRATFOR: "The Geopolitics of Egypt: From Eternal Stability to Turmoil"

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 95



the military was aware of potential cost and benefits of every action in relation to their international relationships.

As discussed earlier, the military had several reasons not to use force against the initial protests. However, the U.S. still made public appeals to the military to exercise restraint when attempting to restore order. Since the U.S. is Egypt's primary benefactor, the military likely takes these appeals seriously, as aid is a crucial pillar of regime stability. According to the CIA World Factbook, in 2012, expenditures in Egypt USD 77.71 billion, while economic revenue was around USD 50.1 billion.<sup>297</sup> Without external aid, the regime would likely be unable to sustain the political influence and legitimacy necessary to stabilize the economy, maintain security, and govern.<sup>298</sup>

When the Muslim Brotherhood began making aggressive political maneuvers, the military had to weigh the potential cost of allowing the Brotherhood to continue to operate with the consequences of removing them by force. The military decided to prioritize the immediate threat to their government by removing the Brotherhood by force. The military likely expected condemnation from the United States, but perhaps not their threats to suspend aid. However, the immediate response from Saudi Arabia, U.A.E, and Kuwait to pledge 12 billion (plus whatever the U.S. withheld) suggests that the Egyptian military was already consulting with the Gulf States about such a scenario. Even Israel opposed the U.S. threat, reminding the Obama administration and congress that a suspension of aid would risk further destabilization. Also citing the numerous potential security implications of an unstable Egypt, the Gulf States justified their support for Egypt while the military continued its crackdowns on the Brotherhood.<sup>299</sup>

The implications of the U.S. threat are now becoming apparent in Egyptian foreign policy, as President Sisi recently secured two high-profile arms deals with the French and the Russians. The no strings attached 2 billion dollar arms deal with the Russians also suggests that other regional actors, like Saudi Arabia, helped negotiate the transaction.<sup>300</sup> The French involves the purchase of 24 modern Rafale fighter jets, and a multi-mission capable frigate with

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<sup>297</sup> CIA Factbook: "Egypt". <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/eg.html>

<sup>298</sup> STRATFOR: "The Weakening of Egypt's Military State". *Geopolitical Weekly*, July 2013.  
<http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/weakening-egypts-military-state>

<sup>299</sup> Dorell, Oren. "Russia Offers Egypt No-Strings-Attached Arms Deal". USA Today. Feb. 2014  
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/02/13/russia-egypt-arms-deal/5459563/>

<sup>300</sup> Ibid.  
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/02/13/russia-egypt-arms-deal/5459563/>

short and medium range missile delivery capabilities. The estimated value of the deal is 5.2 billion euros. The French are allowing Egypt to pay through a lending companies, with French banks financing 50% of the deal.<sup>301</sup> While France and Russia have a long history of selling military hardware to Egypt, the timing is significant because of the status of this U.S. administration's relations with its allies in the Middle East. As mentioned earlier, Israel and Saudi Arabia are particularly perturbed by the lack of U.S. involvement in Syria, the initiation of nuclear talks with Iran, and its threats to cut back its aid to Egypt. In Egypt, the military regime continues to express frustration with the United States for delaying a deal to provide Egypt with 4 F-16 fighter jets, and previous U.S. considerations regarding the suspension or reduction of aid to Egypt.<sup>302</sup> Egypt's eagerness to secure alternative sources of military hardware, and the apparent willingness of the Gulf States to finance some of it, suggests that U.S. allies in the region might be losing confidence in the credibility of the U.S. security guarantees.<sup>303 304</sup> For Egypt and other U.S. allies in the region, renewed hostilities between the United States and Russia might be a beneficial international development. If Russian deal with Egypt is a precursor for a diplomatic pivot towards the Middle East, the competition for influence in the region could relieve U.S. leverage and provide regimes with additional options in their pursuit of economic and security interests.<sup>305</sup>

### *The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and Egypt's Stability*

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<sup>301</sup> Rayman, Noah. "The Real Reason Egypt Is Buying Fighter Jets From France". *Time*. Feb. 2015.

<http://time.com/3710118/egypt-rafale-fighter-jet-france/>

<sup>302</sup> Dorell, Oren. "Russia Offers Egypt No-Strings-Attached Arms Deal"

<sup>303</sup> Landler, Mark and Shanker, Tom. "U.S., in Sign of Displeasure, Halts F-16 Delivery to Egypt". *New York Times*. July, 2013. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/25/world/middleeast/us-halts-delivery-of-f-16-fighters-to-egypt-in-sign-of-disapproval.html>

<sup>304</sup> Rubin, Jennifer. "Middle East Allies Lose Faith in Obama". Oct. 2013

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-turn/wp/2013/10/24/middle-east-allies-lose-faith-in-obama/>

<sup>305</sup> STRATFOR: "Egypt and Russia Strengthen Ties Raise to U.S. Concerns". Analysis, Feb. 2014.

<https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/egypt-and-russia-strengthen-ties-raise-us-concerns>

Currently, the so called Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is positioning itself as a threat to every state with interests in the region. Whether through indirect or direct cooperation, the following countries are either committing military and intelligence assets, or providing military aid and logistical support to fight ISIS: Syria, Libya, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, along with a U.S. coalition of NATO allies that include Britain, France, Australia, Canada, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Denmark.<sup>306</sup> ISIS also made a fair share of asymmetric enemies include The Free Syrian Army, Kurdish militias, Hezbollah, and al-Qaeda and its affiliates.

ISIS formed out of the Arab Spring movement in Syria which first began to deteriorate into civil war back in 2011. While highly debated, ISIS likely received funding, training, and military support from many of the state-actors previously mentioned during initial efforts to support rebels fighting the Assad regime.<sup>307</sup> While the purpose of this work is not to debate the cause of ISIS, the group's presence is significant due to the regional implications it has on stability and the Islamic identity. Originally, many regional actors and their populations contemplated involvement against ISIS. However, regional condemnation is growing among Islamist and seculars alike, as the group continues to exhibit a willingness to target civilians and distribute propaganda displaying their atrocities against captives.<sup>308</sup>

As the current regime continues its campaign to neutralize the Brotherhood's political influence and restore stability, the region is now transfixed with the emergence of ISIS. The combination of these events creates a current geopolitical context similar to what The Free Officers Movement experienced in 1952. In both cases, the head of state's removal by the military coincided with the introduction of a common regional threat, Israel in 1952 and ISIS today. In response to this threat, Nasser used Pan-Arab nationalism as a platform to try to unite Arab states against Israel. Similarly, President Sisi recently called for the establishment of a Pan-Arab coalition to fight ISIS and other common threats in the future.<sup>309</sup> Like Nasser, President Sisi is also showing a willingness to defy the United States, first with the crackdowns against the

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<sup>306</sup> Cooper, Helene. "Obama Enlists 9 Allies to Help in the Battle Against ISIS". *New York Times*. Sept. 2014  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/06/world/middleeast/us-and-allies-form-coalition-against-isis.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/06/world/middleeast/us-and-allies-form-coalition-against-isis.html?_r=0)

<sup>307</sup> Reynolds, Ben. "Iran Didn't Create ISIS; We Did". *The Diplomat*. Aug. 2014  
<http://thediplomat.com/2014/08/iran-didnt-create-isis-we-did/>

<sup>308</sup> STRATFOR: "Pan-Arab Military Remains Elusive". *Geopolitical Diary*. 2015  
<https://www.stratfor.com/geopolitical-diary/pan-arab-military-remains-elusive>

<sup>309</sup> STRATFOR: "Pan-Arab Military Remains Elusive"

Brotherhood, and then with unilateral strikes against Islamic militants in Libya.<sup>310</sup> Furthermore, with escalating tensions between the U.S. and Russia, President Sisi's recent arms deal with Russians is yet another example of Egypt displaying its autonomy in a way that is reminiscent of the early Cold War.

After WWII, the Middle East consisted of young states struggling to pursue interests and establish legitimacy to survive the transition away from colonialism and empire. What makes the present geopolitical context unique, is that the Arab Spring and the emergence of ISIS occurred in a regional system with well-established governments and regional relationships. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Israel, and Turkey, while not formally aligned, were all positioning themselves to oppose a potential growing threat from Iran.<sup>311312</sup> However, in the last five years new heads of state came to power in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, Iran, and Israel. Combined with the Arab Spring protests, the civil war in Syria, and ISIS, the instability around the region led to many unexpected shifts in regional dynamics. Qatar defied Saudi Arab, pledging support and aid for the short-lived Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt. Turkey is suddenly increasing its anti-Israeli rhetoric and allowing the violent Islamist group, Hamas, to take refuge in Turkey since being pushed out of Damascus.<sup>313</sup> Bordering both Iraq and Syria, Turkey is also hesitant to engage the ISIS to avoid becoming a target, and because ISIS is fighting Turkey's historical Kurdish enemy.<sup>314</sup> Iran is engaging ISIS in Iraq, and the Iranian backed group Hezbollah, continues to fight ISIS in Syria as well as revolutionary groups looking to overthrow Assad. Smaller states, like the United Arab Emirates and Jordan, were contemplating their level of involvement; however, following strong international condemnation of ISIS following the execution of the captured Jordanian pilot, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to the conflict.<sup>315</sup>

In Egypt, the ISIS situation is now a domestic issue, as militant Islamists in the Sinai and neighboring Libya recently swore allegiance to the group. An ISIS affiliate in Libya recently released video footage showing the execution of 21 Coptic Christian migrant workers from Egypt. President Sisi responded by ordering airstrikes, and support for the Egyptian military

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<sup>310</sup> Ibid.

<sup>311</sup> STRATFOR: "A Middle Eastern Balance of Power Emerges"

<sup>312</sup> STRATFOR: "Syria, Iran and the Balance of Power in the Middle East"

<sup>313</sup> STRATFOR: "The U.S. Role in Warming Israel-Turkish Relations"

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> STRATFOR: "A Middle Eastern Balance of Power Emerges"

remains high. In the Sinai, militants claim allegiance to the rival groups al-Qaeda and ISIS, both claiming responsibility for several attacks on military personnel and checkpoints.<sup>316</sup> While the presence of militants in the Sinai is nothing new, Islamist groups across the region condemned Egypt's crackdown on the Brotherhood, and the porous border with an unstable Libya only exacerbates the security situation in Egypt. However, talks between Israel and Egypt regarding the Rafah border crossing and reports of increased Israeli/Egyptian cooperation in the Sinai suggest the two states identify mutual interests in securing the desolate terrain.<sup>317</sup>

For the military establishment and President Sisi, the ISIS situation provides a unique opportunity to deflect any internal opposition, gain additional domestic support, and reassert Egypt's leadership role in the region. The recent arms acquisitions suggest that President Sisi is preparing to do just that. The Russian deal consists of small arms to upgrade and supply Egyptian ground troops, while the additional Rafales will considerably enhance Egyptian air support capabilities. Furthermore, the French frigates have short to medium range missile capabilities that will allow Egypt to engage targets in the Sinai from the Mediterranean and/or Red Sea.<sup>318</sup> Of course, acquiring such capabilities represents a potential threat to Israel; however, Israel did not object to this arms deal as they have in the past. This is encouraging because the use of these weapons against militants in the Sinai will require substantial cooperation between the two states. However, because Israel remains extremely unpopular among the population, cooperation will have to be discreet. The regime will need to conduct high-profile attacks and continue to publically lobby for Pan-Arab cooperation against Islamic militants. Doing so might reassure Egyptians that the military is addressing the threat. As past Arab conflicts attest, the public responds positively to Presidents that elevate Egypt's prestige by taking a leadership role in the region.<sup>319</sup> However, President Sisi must approach the Arab unity issue delicately. If Egypt expends too much political capital, and the establishment of a coalition fails, it could have a negative effect on public opinion and regime legitimacy. If the regime is able to adequately give the perception of leadership, keep terrorist attacks in Cairo to a minimum, and respond successfully to threats developing in Libya and in the Sinai, it could significantly bolster public support for President Sisi and solidify the legitimacy of the military regime.

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<sup>316</sup> STRATFOR: "A Middle Eastern Balance of Power Emerges"

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Rayman, Noah. "The Real Reason Egypt Is Buying Fighter Jets From France"

<sup>319</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 102-109

While a majority of Egyptians associate with the Islamic identity. Following recent events with the Muslim Brotherhood, the ISIS threat brings back the debate regarding the role of political Islam in the government. The Egyptian Judicial system already incorporates elements of Islamic law, and the popular al-Nour party currently represents Islamist interest in the Egyptian political system.<sup>320</sup> With this presence of Islamic involvement in politics, there appears to be little demand amongst the population to invite the Brotherhood back into the political process.<sup>321</sup> This does not suggest that the Islamic identity is now a less important part in Egyptian society, but how recent events concerning the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS shape the debate around political Islam remains to be seen.

The current public animosity towards the Brotherhood, the increased presence of militant activity in the Sinai, and the brutality of ISIS could produce a dampening effect on aspirations for a broader Islamist identities. Such a scenario might involve Islamists in Egypt condoning the actions of the military, or adopting a more moderate political approach now that they have the opportunity/responsibility to represent the Islamic identity in government. Contrarily, if these Islamists come off as too hardline or too moderate, the inability to adequately represent the Islamic community could lead to more discontent. The military needs to remain inclusive and aware of the needs of both moderate Islamists and secular reformists alike. The challenge for the military will be how to give these groups small, yet significant political victories that allow them to remain popular and legitimize the current political situation. At the moment, the Egyptians appear comfortable with Islamic influences in government, so long as the secular military continues to provide oversight. If this is indeed the case, it is once again contrary to democratic norms where civilian governments exercise authority over the military. This interesting dynamic between the population and the military regime, combined with the unique structure of the state, suggests that a transition to democratic governance might have negative short-term effect on the economy, security, and international relationships.

### **Conclusion**

The history of the region and the formation of suprastate identities created the foundation for the present structure of the Egyptian regime. Empire of different origins attempted to govern

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<sup>320</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

a vast territory with several important population centers surrounded by less economically and politically significant rural communities. For the sake of efficiency and stability, most of these communities were left to govern themselves with a certain level of autonomy. Before the rise of Islam, they did occasionally adopt cultural and religious traditions from external influences, but were never forced to assimilate. As a result, they maintained their ethnic, tribal, and linguistic affiliations. With the advent of Islam, communities still were loyal to those entities but were able to periodically unify behind their common religion to resist regional intervention from foreign actors.

The colonial period crippled the political and economic infrastructure of the Ottoman Empire and its many provinces. Fierce competition in the new European state system caused the countries to aggressively pursue interests within the various provinces. Politically, they co-opted landowning elites, then exploited the economy by streamlining the production of specific resources that reflected their own interests. In doing so, they compromised their political and economic infrastructure at the expense of Ottoman legitimacy. By the time external forces introduced the state system after WWI and WWII, new independent regimes were left with a combination of military hardware, and devastated political and economic institutions. Under these circumstances, regimes had to develop policies to unite their populations and legitimize their rule.

For Egypt, this involved a dual strategy to secure interests. The use of aggressive autonomy and appeals to popular identity. The approach led to the consolidation of power through political restructuring and the nationalization of economic resources. To stabilize the economy and legitimize their political dominance, the military regime had to expand its influence in the region and then use this influence to secure external sources of aid.

Since Nasser, Egyptian leaders employed a similar strategy to solidify domestic authority through the extraction of economic resources and security concessions from the international system.<sup>322</sup> In a bi-polar international system, Nasser was able to exercise autonomy and secure resources by making himself a symbol of Arab nationalism. By asserting Egypt's position of leadership, the state became an indispensable element in U.S. and Soviet policy in the region.<sup>323</sup> With Nasser's death, Anwar Sadat had to secure his own legitimacy. He did so by moving away

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<sup>322</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 111-112

<sup>323</sup> Mandaville. *Global Political Islam*, 55-58

from the socialist policies associated with nationalism, securing the flow of external economic and military resources by appealing to U.S. interests. By brokering a peace with Israel, Sadat did initially gamble with Egyptian credibility in the Arab world. However, his decision became the linchpin of current Egyptian economic and security interests.<sup>324</sup> Through this peace, Sadat's predecessor Hosni Mubarak, derived legitimacy by acting as a bridge between the Middle East and the United States. Since then, nearly all diplomatic initiatives in the region continue to go through Cairo. This enabled Egypt to remain instrumental in the region, allowing the state to secure external aid while reestablishing its position of leadership in the Arab world.<sup>325</sup>

When the Soviet Union dissolved, Mubarak reaffirmed Egyptian significance to its U.S. benefactor via the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the pursuit of al-Qaeda.<sup>326</sup> This not only allowed Mubarak to secure a steady flow of U.S. aid in the wake of the Cold War, but it led to an increase of security cooperation with Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. The arrangement also gave the Egyptian military an opportunity to purge the its population of Islamist discontents and political opponents under the guise of fighting "extremists".<sup>327</sup>

While many view Egypt's modern leaders as vastly different, the strategies they employed to pursue interests and secure legitimacy are similar. Nasser secured economic and military resources by taking advantage of competing superpowers, also allowing him to build legitimacy by promoting Pan-Arab identity and nationalism. Conversely, Sadat appealed to the growing Islamist community through a combination of rhetoric and domestic initiatives, seeking to mitigate opposition to controversial policies directed at securing state interests. While Sadat lost his life at the hands of the Islamists, the regime and its policies survived.

Like Nasser and Sadat before him, Mubarak's approach was a continuation of their strategy to advance state interests by securing external security and economic resources. With a tighter grip on economic and political institutions, there was less of a need for the regime to adopt an identity. Instead, the regime had to only monitor and occasionally satisfy popular identities. For a time, Mubarak accomplished this through Sadat's peace with Israel. Through the peace, Egypt secured continual aid from the U.S. and it established itself as a significant member of the peace negotiations between the Israel and the Palestinians. As the de facto representative

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid, p. 83-84

<sup>325</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 109-111.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid, p. 107-111

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.



of Arab interests to the west, Mubarak made the military regime vital to the U.S. regional policy.<sup>328</sup>

The unrest that led to the replacement of Mubarak did little to disrupt the military political and economic infrastructure. Since the military establishment is much larger than one figurehead, they also revealed an ability to preserve political and economic power despite the removal of the executive. The fact that the political unrest targeted the Mubarak family, and not the military regime, suggests that the military remains a respected institution in society. Therefore, it is unlikely that the military will have to use force against a mobilized Egyptian population. Instead, they can politically sacrifice a few individuals to preserve the military regime and ride out political turmoil by posturing as neutral arbiters. The use of force is a calculated measure directed only at specific elements of opposition that pose a threat to the infrastructure of the military-dominated regime. So long as they secure an element of popular support from other segments of the population, the use of force remains a justifiable option to protect their position in society. This is evident in their handling of the Arab Spring. The military oversaw the peaceful removal of Mubarak, encouraged the formation of political parties, and then portrayed their action against Morsi as an instrument of popular demand. This approach suggests that the military wants to convince the population that political alternatives still exist. In this way, the military limits the strength of all opposition by dividing the population between those who seek to politically influence change, and those that seek to force it.

By leaving the structure of the bureaucracy intact, the regime upholds the public perception of their neutrality. Furthermore, their current cooperation with the al-Nour Islamist party portrays an element of political inclusiveness that the Brotherhood lacked.<sup>329</sup> Throughout the turmoil and up to the present, the military continues to display political savvy by using a combination of patience, inclusiveness, and calculated force. In doing so, they gradually removed Mubarak and politically outmaneuvered the Brotherhood. With the 2011 legislation that requires political parties to acquire funding from within the state, the military also puts the purse of new political parties in the hands of co-opted power brokers.<sup>330</sup> Without the legitimacy and experience of the military, these political entities are unlikely to outmaneuver the regime or become influential enough to force significant political change in the short term.

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<sup>328</sup> Hinnebusch and Ehteshami. *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, p. 108, 109

<sup>329</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

<sup>330</sup> El-Sherif, Ashraf. "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Predicament"

Since the turmoil from 2011 to 2013, the military establishment succeeded in avoiding a potential Gamal Mubarak Presidency and eliminated the Muslim Brotherhood as a viable political opposition. By inviting specific business elites back into the fold, they also preserved their economic and institutional fiefdoms. The Suez Canal remains secure, and the military is increasing its cooperation with Israel. While the U.S. continues to withhold specific elements of aid to the regime, current instability in Iraq and Syria will likely diminish the salience of their actions against the Brotherhood. Even with a reduction of U.S. military resources, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Russia, and France all displayed a willingness to fill that void.

Due to the Suez Canal, border with Israel, and position of leadership in the region, Egypt will remain a relevant state in the Middle East. This relevance means that external actors will continue to have an interest in Egypt's stability. The military establishment's ability to navigate the recent turmoil in Egypt displayed their stability as an institution, as well as their political, diplomatic, and military competence. This stability and competence reaffirmed their legitimacy as an institution and governing body, enabling it to pacify the internal discontent. Of course, democracy in Egypt is not impossible. However, the inability of the Arab Spring to force this change suggests that it will require a combination of a military willingness to relinquish control, and external incentives to encourage such a transition. For the time being, external actors are providing aid to help stabilize the current regime; therefore, the military establishment is likely to maintain their political and economic influence over the Egyptian state.

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